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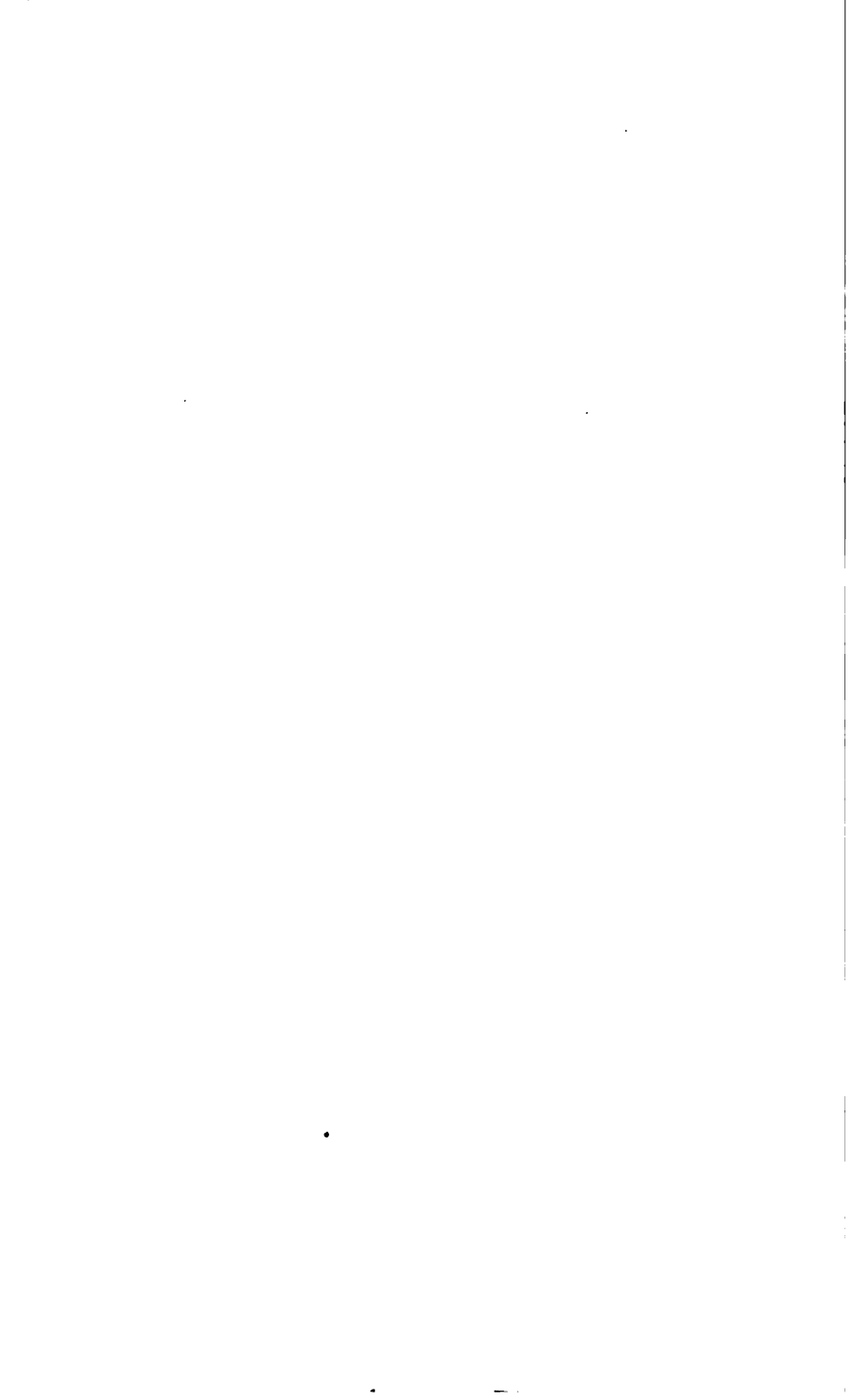
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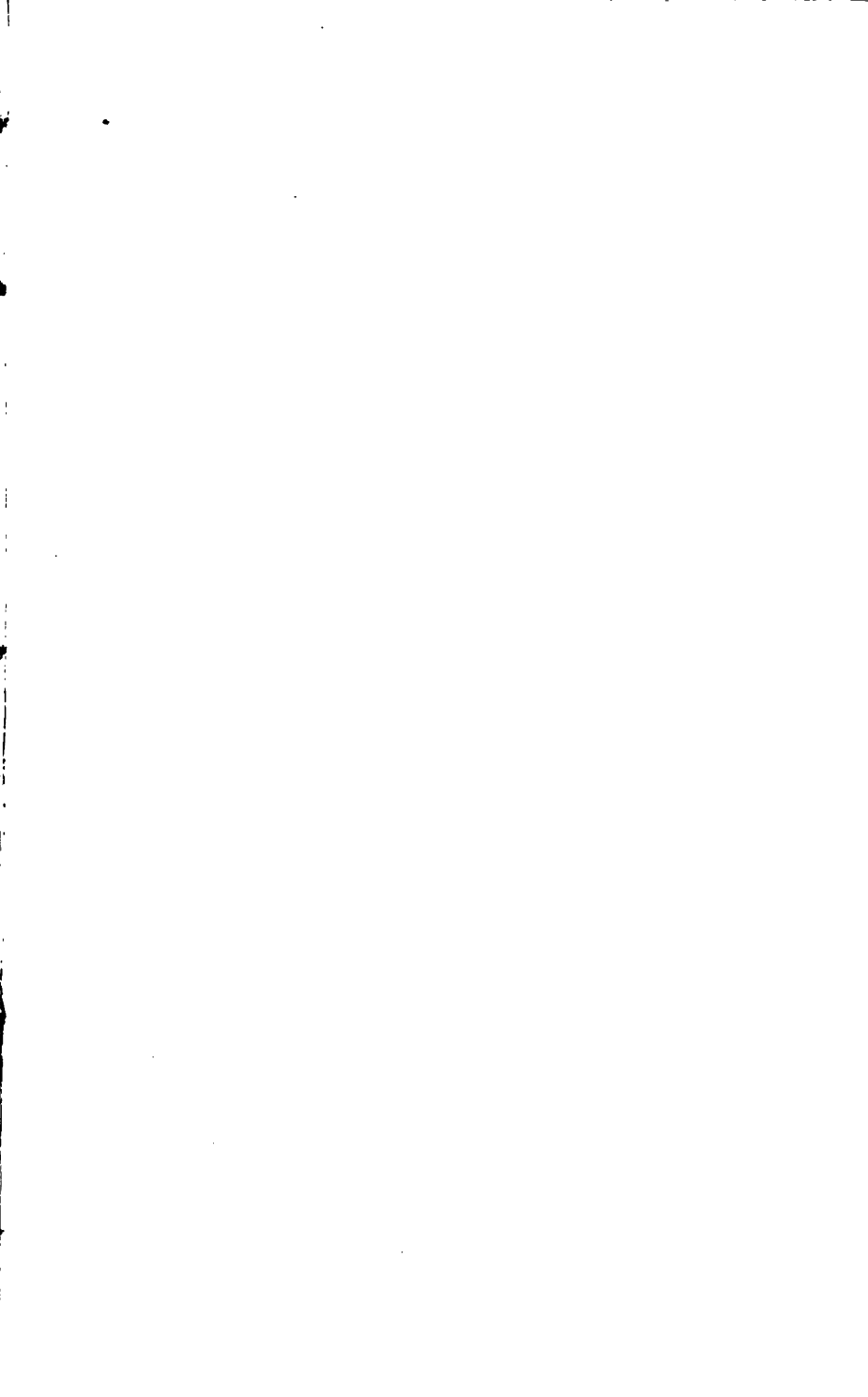
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THE CURATE OF LINWOOD.





THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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THE
CURATE OF LINWOOD:
OR,
THE REAL STRENGTH OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

BY C. G. H.



WILLIAMS

(Page 33.)

LONDON:
SEELEY, BURNSIDE, AND SEELEY;
BATH: BINNS AND GOODWIN; EDINBURGH: W. P. KENNEDY;
GLASGOW: D. BRYCE; ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE AND SON;
DUBLIN: W. CURRY, JUN. AND CO.

1845.



TO THE
REVEREND WILLIAM GOODE, M.A.,

WHOSE STEDFAST MAINTENANCE
OF THE "TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS,"
HAS SECURED THE ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE
OF ALL WHO LOVE THAT TRUTH ;
AS A TRIBUTE OF SINCERE ADMIRATION
OF HIS CHRISTIAN CHARACTER,

AND OF HIS
NOBLE DEFENCE OF THE PROTESTANT CAUSE,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

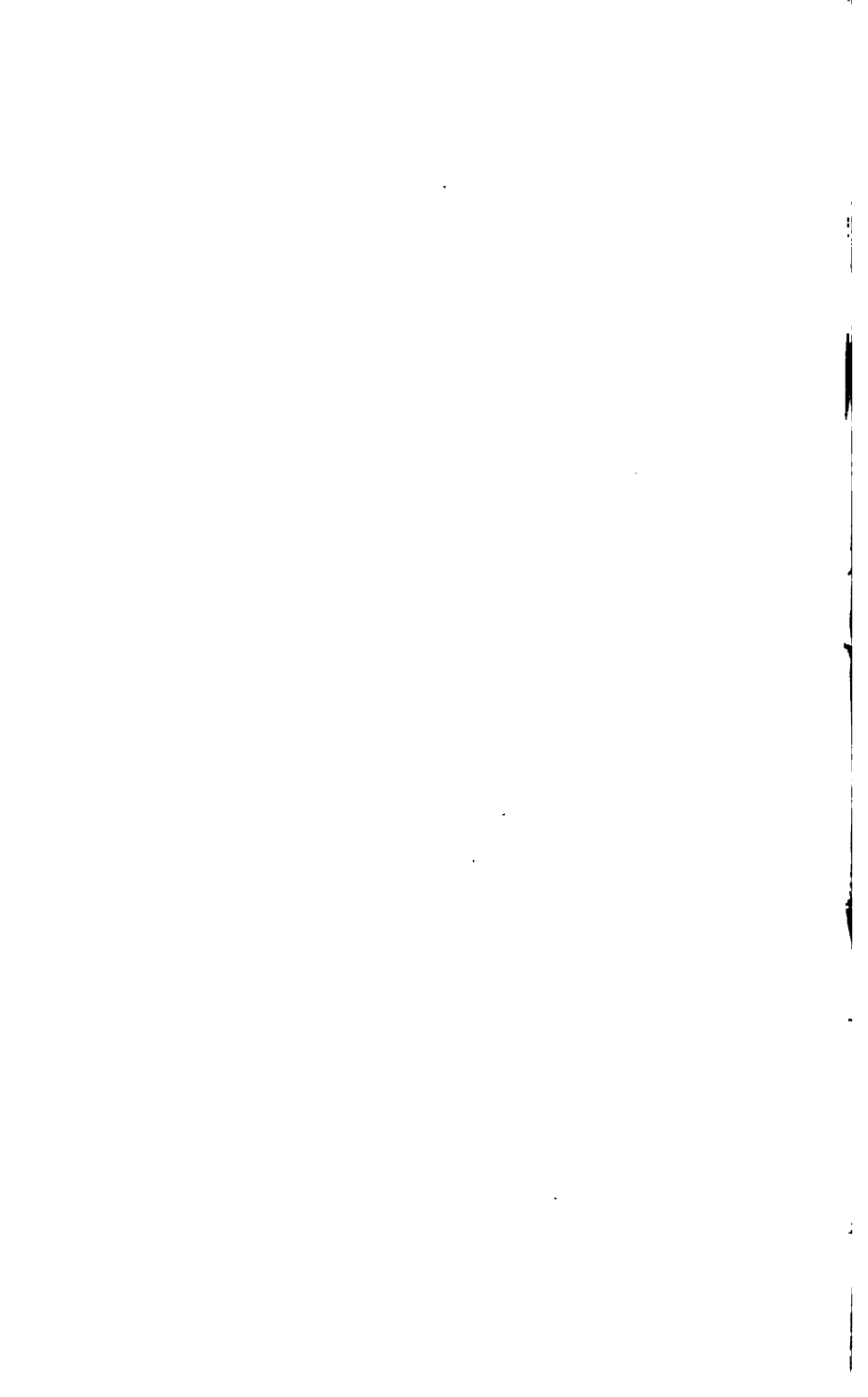
THE efforts of the Tractarian party have been, for several years, unremitting, to gain proselytes to the peculiar dogmas of their school. They have tried every mode to influence the public mind, and to increase their own reputation. In every department of literature, they are to be found; exhibiting a zeal, a stedfastness, and a talent, worthy of a better cause. They agitate through the daily press. They sit in the critic's chair, in Magazines and Reviews: they preach in sermons and tracts. They enounce their peculiar system in learned

treatises for the scholar : they scatter the A. B. C. of their doctrines in cards and leaflets for the poor. They clothe their views in attractive and romantic tales for the young, the inexperienced, and the ardent. They endeavour to catch the eye, by the beauty of their embellishments. The nursery, even, is not forgotten ; rhymes and stories for children are supplied in every form and of every kind, to suit high and low, rich and poor ; and thus they proceed with noiseless step, to win their way alike into the palace and the cottage ; and stealthily to lay the meshes of the net over every class of the community.

The Author of the following little volume has thought, that it is not only necessary to condemn the publications alluded to, but

that books of a similar description, embodying the principles of eternal Truth, in opposition to the errors of Tractarian Theology, ought to be placed in the hands of the public generally. With this view the Work has been undertaken, in the hope that in one of the departments of lighter literature, it may be found not altogether useless in elucidating some of the cardinal doctrines of the word of God; and not altogether powerless on the right side, in this day of necessary contention for "the faith once delivered to the saints."

December, 1844.



THE CURATE OF LINWOOD.

CHAPTER I.

It was a mild, cloudless evening early in the month of July. The sun had just set, and the crimson hue of its departing rays yet lingered upon the towers of Oxford, and shed their soft radiance over a distant view of the surrounding country.

Charles Selwyn closed the volume which had for some time engaged his attention ; and rising, he threw the window of his sitting-room open, and leaning his brow on the casement, inhaled, with delight, the sweet evening air that blew softly across the distant fields.

His reverie was soon disturbed by a knock at the door of his room; and his invitation to enter was immediately responded to, by the appearance of Henry Egerton, his earliest and dearest friend.

"I am glad to see that you have laid aside your musty volumes at last," said Egerton, as he advanced towards the window. "Are you at leisure now, Selwyn, to walk with me for an hour? The evening is beautiful, and I long to have some conversation with you upon the subject which chiefly occupies our thoughts."

"I will gladly accompany you," replied Selwyn, as they left the room; "but I fear you will find me a dull companion, for my head aches sadly, and my thoughts seem all to have fallen asleep on their posts."

"You are exhausted, my dear friend," said Egerton, looking anxiously, as he spoke, at Selwyn's countenance.

"The air will refresh me," replied Selwyn; and they walked on in silence, until they had passed the precincts of the town, and entered upon the fields beyond.

"In a few days, my dear Selwyn," said Egerton at length, "we shall have entered upon the duties of our sacred office. Tell me what are your feelings, Charles, in the prospect of its awful responsibility?"

A degree of reserve natural to Selwyn's character, but which towards Egerton had never before exhibited itself, had lately often marked his intercourse even with him; but on this evening it seemed banished, and he spoke to his friend with the frank confidence of former days.

"I will not conceal from you, Egerton," he said, "that the prevailing feeling with which I look forward to the duties of the office which we are about to assume, is one of painful despondency. I feel so unable to undertake the charge of immortal souls; and I tremble lest if any perish, his blood be required at my hand." He paused. Egerton raised his eyes for a moment to his countenance, and saw that it had become paler than before, and that an expression of painful emotion contracted his brow. But it passed, and he continued.

"It is only sometimes that such gloomy thoughts oppress me. At other times I succeed in losing the sense of personal responsibility, in the remembrance of the powers conveyed by the sacred commission with which I shall soon be entrusted; and think of myself, not as an individual, too imperfect and erring to venture to assume the office of a guide to others, but as a member of the apostolical priesthood appointed to be in all ages the dispensers of the blessings of salvation to the church."

"Ah, my friend," said Egerton, earnestly, "do not seek to forget or repress these convictions of the personally responsible nature of the office upon the duties of which we are now about to enter. They are the voice of the Holy Spirit seeking to awaken us to the consciousness, that by His aid alone we may hope to fulfil them. I too, when these convictions of my own incapacity for the fulfilment of the vows I am about to take, fill my heart, should in truth be overwhelmed, did not that blessed Spirit make such convictions a means of leading me 'to the Rock that is higher than I.'

In the command of Christ, 'Go ye and preach the gospel to every creature,' I find my warrant; in his promise, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness,' my encouragement. And thus, confiding in the power and promise of my Saviour, I go forward, in the joyful hope, that, weak and erring as I feel myself to be, the excellency of his power will be manifested even in the earthen vessel; and I shall be privileged to bear to lost and guilty sinners, such as I but for his grace should still have been, the glad tidings of salvation through the blood of the Lamb."

He paused for a few moments; then turning to Selwyn, continued with impressive earnestness,—"*He is a rock*, my dear friend. Oh, if you would rescue sinners from the heaving billows of the wrath of God, take your own stand upon this Rock, not upon the shifting sands of human authority, from which you are every moment liable to be swept, even while you cast forth the rope by which you seek to drag the perishing to land."

Henry Egerton was the younger son of a nobleman in the south of England. He had been educated for the ministerial profession, not from any preference expressed or felt by himself; for in his boyish days his desire had been to engage in that of arms, in which many of the heroes of his family had distinguished themselves. But a valuable living was in the gift of Lord Egerton's family, and to this provision for his younger son, even from the period of Henry's birth, Lord Egerton's views had been directed; and the principles of obedience to parental authority had been too successfully inculcated in Henry's mind, for him to think of remonstrance, or do more than heave a sigh, as the visions of military renown faded before his regretful gaze.

But long before the period of his ordination arrived, a different warfare from that of which his boyish heart had dreamed, engaged the powers of Henry's soul; and a victory more glorious than may be won on the battle-field became the subject of his earnest aspirations.

With all a mother's love, with all a Christian

mother's tender solicitude, Lady Egerton had watched over her children's youthful days; and when she saw that, irrespective of his meetness for the office of the Christian ministry, Henry was destined, as a profession, to that high calling, the zeal of a child of God for the glory of her Master's name, and for the salvation of the souls He came to bless, mingled itself with the fervour of natural affection, while she prayed, that before he took upon himself the charge of feeding the "flock of God, which He hath purchased with his own blood," her beloved boy might himself be led to return to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul.

She sought not this boon in vain. The love of Henry for his mother ever obtained for her instructions a willing attention; and these were the means employed by the Spirit of God, to awaken in his heart a deep sense of the guilt and danger of his condition by nature, and to lead him to the foot of the cross.

There he obtained pardon for his own soul, and assurance of eternal safety; and the first-fruits of the change which soon manifested

itself in his whole character, were, an ardent love to the souls of men, and an intense desire to lead others to the Saviour in whose "favour" he had obtained "life," and whose "lovingkindness" he had found in his daily experience to be "better than life."

Charles Selwyn was the only son of a dignitary of the English Church. He, like his friend, had been from childhood destined to the office of the Christian ministry, but with his own full consent—nay, earnest desire.

Reserved and contemplative in his disposition, and studious, at once by taste and habit, the favourite occupation of his leisure hours had been to peruse the writings of the ancient fathers; or in the long solitary walks and rides in which he loved to indulge, to image in his day-dreams, a church, faultless in its structure, and perfect in all its parts, as the far-famed temple of Judea. But alas! while he admired the fair proportions, and venerated the altars of his ideal sanctuary, the Holy of holies, the Mercy-seat, and the glory of the Shekinah

were veiled from his eyes ; and all unconscious of the darkness in which that veil enwrapt him, he sought not that the Lord the Spirit might remove it from his heart ; but when an aching void, a longing for he knew not what, oppressed it, he turned with redoubled devotion to the ritual and ceremonies of his voluntary worship, the husks with which he sought to satisfy the immortal spirit's craving for the bread of life.

Henry Egerton and Charles Selwyn had been companions in childhood, for the towers of Egerton Hall rose from their embowering woods, not far from the park that surrounded the episcopal palace of Selwyn's father. They had passed together at Oxford the years of preparation for their sacred office, and now at the same time were about to be ordained ; Henry Egerton to the curacy of his family living, the rector of which, a very old man, only waited until his former pupil should be qualified to occupy his place, before resigning to him the duties of his office ; and Selwyn to a curacy on the coast of Devonshire, of which

the rector resided chiefly upon a richer benefice which he possessed in another part of the country.

The long anticipated day at length arrived, and Selwyn and Egerton solemnly assumed the character of ambassadors for Christ, messengers of the glad tidings of salvation to a perishing world.

Early on the succeeding day, Selwyn accompanied Egerton to his quiet home, to spend the evening with him there before proceeding to his curacy.

Lord Egerton (the brother of Henry, for his father had died about a year previous to his ordination,) had affectionately entreated Henry to make Egerton Hall his home, during the period that intervened before the rectory should become his own; but Henry had begged his brother's permission rather to occupy, as his temporary abode, a cottage situated near the church in a beautiful part of the park, which had long been the favourite haunt of his meditative hours; and thither accordingly the friends now proceeded.

The hand of affection had been busy around

Henry's abode; and in addition to the substantial comforts with which it abounded, the favorite books which filled the shelves of the library, the choice plants which blossomed in the carefully-cultured garden, and the old spaniel, the pet and plaything of Henry's boyhood, which had been removed from the hall, and now bounded from the door to greet his master's return, whispered to Henry's affectionate heart the sweet assurance that years of separation, and his brother's long residence in a foreign land, had not deprived him of the place he held in that dear relative's affection, nor banished from his brother's remembrance his favorite pursuits and tastes.

A smiling party from the hall awaited Henry's arrival, and affectionately welcomed him to his home; and the few members of his flock who had lingered in his path, to receive the accustomed kind greeting of their young master, upon whom, in his newly-assumed office of their pastor, they now looked with a degree of veneration unknown before, returned to tell their more retiring neighbours, that he had

promised very soon to visit them all in their own houses.

Henry's countenance beamed with the joy that filled his heart, as he found himself once more surrounded by home scenes, and home feelings; and his inmost soul blessed God that it was to those thus united to him, thus familiar and loved from his earliest years, that he was now commissioned to preach the glad tidings of salvation.

One sad thought alone mingled with, and sometimes almost banished his happy emotions. His mother—she who would have so rejoiced to see the fruit of her labours, the answer to her prayers and tears—she was gone. “But we are not separated, my mother,” whispered Henry, as, retired for a few moments from the joyous party within the cottage, he stood gazing upon a spreading myrtle, which he remembered having, with his childish hands, assisted his mother to plant: “I repose beneath the shadow of His wing whose smile is thy eternal delight; thou hast reached thy Father's house, and I am journeying towards it.”

Selwyn, upon this evening, entered with a cordial sympathy into the happiness of his friend, and mingled with apparent animation in the cheerful converse of those around him ; but the sight of Henry's happy home increased the involuntary sadness of his feelings in the remembrance of how lonely his would be.

The only surviving member of his family was a sister, a few years younger than himself, to whom he was attached by the tenderest affection ; but he knew that he must not hope to retain her long as an inmate of his dwelling, as she had been for years engaged to his friend Henry Egerton, and he had promised that their marriage should take place as soon as Henry had a home to offer to her.

Henry rode with him to the boundary of his parish, on the succeeding day, and reminded him of his promise as they were about to part.

"I urge the performance of your promise thus early, my dear Selwyn," said he, "because I feel that, when together settled in our quiet home, Helen and I shall be better able with

undivided minds to devote ourselves to the blessed work of our heavenly Master."

"The knowledge that, so far as earthly power can do so, I shall thus secure both your happiness and hers, my dear friend," replied Selwyn, "is the only thought that could reconcile me to part with Helen ; but it does so. Come in a few weeks to visit me at Linwood, and I think I may venture to promise that you shall not return alone."

It was late in the evening of the succeeding day, when Charles Selwyn reached the scene of his future labours.

The incumbent of the parish had kindly urged him to consider the long-deserted rectory as his home ; and thither his sister Helen, who had resided for some years with a relative in a distant part of the county, had repaired a few days previous to her brother's arrival, which she now welcomed with delight.

The rectory was an old house, beautifully situated on the declivity of a sloping hill, whose base was washed by the waves of the English

Channel, and embowered in deep woods, the secluded paths of which suited well Charles's love of solitary musings.

Helen Selwyn and her brother had for years been much separated, but they now met with the warm affection that had united them from infancy, unchanged; and as each day spent in her society rendered his gentle sister more dear to Charles's heart, he almost rejoiced, that since he must be severed from this his best earthly blessing, he would be so before her society should have become even more essential to his happiness, than he already felt it to be.

"My dear brother," said Helen, as they walked together from evening service, upon the first Sunday of Charles's officiating in his new charge, "may I speak to you as we used to do, when no thought was entertained by either of us that we did not hasten to communicate to the other? May I be thus open still, dear Charles?—for I cannot feel satisfied without telling you of the reflections which your sermon this evening has excited in my mind."

A slight flush passed for a moment over the

usually pale cheek of Charles; but Helen did not see it, for her eyes were bent on the ground; and Charles affectionately pressed the hand that rested on his arm, while he replied, "Yes, my own Helen; say what you will to me now, as you used to do in the happy days that are passed away for ever."

Helen was silent for a few minutes; her thoughts had wandered back to their youthful days, and Henry Egerton would not have marvelled that as remembrances of the past crowded fast upon her heart, a sigh of regret, an emotion of sadness, at the thought of her approaching separation from the brother whose love had been the light of her childhood's days, mingled with the bright hopes for the future, in which his image stood unrivaled.

But it was not her own prospects that now engaged Helen's most anxious thoughts. "Since you permit me thus to speak, my dear brother," she continued, turning with impressive earnestness towards Charles, "let me ask you—and if my own want of a ready understanding was alone to blame, I know that you

will tell me so—is it not the office of the ministers of the Gospel to preach ‘Christ crucified’?—and did that blessed, that saving doctrine, hold, in your sermon of to-day, the place it holds in the revelation of God’s will to man?”

“It is the office of the ministers of the Gospel to preach Christ crucified,” replied Charles; “but Holy Scripture forbids us to ‘cast our pearls before swine;’ and these sacred mysteries must not be explicitly or prominently brought forward upon all occasions, until a certain meetness of heart and life has prepared the people aright to receive them.”

“And how, unless the doctrine of our blessed Lord’s atonement be preached in all its freeness and simplicity,” inquired Helen, earnestly, “is that meetness of heart and life to be obtained? Can the branch put forth its blossom until it be grafted on the living stem? or can the sinner love the God he has offended, until assured of his free forgiveness?”

“We do assure the sinner that God is willing to forgive him,” replied Charles; “willing to

bestow, through his appointed channel, the Church, that Holy Spirit whose dwelling in the soul produces works meet for justification."

"To be efficacious, then, as a means of justification, even to use your own argument, dear Charles," replied Helen, "this sanctification must proceed from an implanted principle of love to God; (for surely you will allow that there is no merit in works whose only spring in the heart is the emotion of selfish fear;) and if even the view of the character of God which represents Him as willing to pardon sin—if even the remote hope of future justification and peace, when unfolded to the sinner's mind, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, have power to produce this holy obedience, can you indeed believe that the full sense of present justification through the work of Christ alone, and consequent acceptance and peace with God by His merits and death, revealed to the soul by the same Spirit, (for 'the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God,') would produce less love, less holy obe-

dience, or be in any danger of making the revelation of the free gospel a ministry of licentiousness?"

"I will not answer you, Helen, in my own words," replied Charles; "but in the words of one of the more experienced teachers of our holy apostolical church—'Justification is the habitation in us of God the Father, and of the Word incarnate, through the Holy Ghost.' If such be the opinion of those whom God has made the 'sole channel of the gift of the Holy Ghost,' and if such have been the opinions of the ancient fathers of the church, shall I, think you—even though such doubts as you would instil, present themselves to my mind—venture to oppose my own judgment to such powerful authority?"

"My dear brother," replied Helen, "I would have you, in obedience to the command to 'prove all things,' try the opinions even of the wisest and holiest of human beings, by the infallible test of the word of God. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is

no light in them.’* And oh, my brother,” she continued, with affectionate solemnity, after a short pause, employed on her part, in a silent prayer to the Spirit of truth, “it is not with the care of your own soul only that you are charged; but when there are around you hundreds of immortal beings, dependant, as far as outward means are concerned, upon you for the bread of life, does it not become doubly important that you should indeed ‘prove all things,’ to ascertain whether you are feeding them with food or poison?”

A cloud passed over Charles’s brow, and his sister felt that the arm trembled upon which she leant; but he spoke not for a few moments, and when he did so, it was with a forced constraint of manner, and a sternness of tone, such as Helen had never witnessed, far less met, in him before.

“When I invited you, Helen, to speak to me as your brother, with all the frank confidence of former days, I did not suppose that you would have forgotten that, as your pastor, I

* Isa. viii. 20.

stand related to you by a very different bond—or that you would have attempted to teach one who now holds towards you the office of the church's appointed instructor of your soul."

Helen looked up for a moment in almost startled surprise, as she listened to words so unlike what she had ever been accustomed to hear from her gentle and affectionate brother; but she quickly bent her head again to hide the fast falling tears that would not be restrained, and they continued in silence their walk towards the rectory.

Charles paused before opening the garden-gate; Helen gently withdrew her hand from his arm, and would have proceeded alone; for he sometimes, though never without a parting word, left her here to pursue his own solitary rambles; but he detained her hand in his, and said very gently, "Forgive me, my sister. I did not mean to pain you; but let not this subject be renewed between us."

He bent towards her, and tenderly kissed her brow. Helen pressed the hand she held, and then turning aside, for she could not at

that moment bear that he should witness the anguish that wrung her heart, she hastened to pour forth her soul, in the solitude of her own apartment, to Him, in whom, at all times, and in all their sorrows, his children possess "a place of refuge."

CHAPTER II.

DURING the short time that still intervened before Helen's marriage, she abstained, according to her brother's request, from all conversation on the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel; but that there should be any subject upon which they might not freely converse was very painful to her, and especially so when that subject was the nearest to her heart, the most important to the eternal well-being of the brother she so fondly loved.

Never before had she so valued the privilege of intercessory prayer; and in pouring out her heart to Him, whose human nature so well can sympathize in human love, and who, as God-man, is "mighty to save," she found relief, and patiently awaited the answer to her prayer, which, though it might be delayed, she yet believed would surely come.

Charles was too much accustomed to mark every change in Helen's countenance, to allow her to succeed in veiling from his eyes the sadness that often oppressed her. It deeply pained him; and he looked forward almost with desire to the day when he should commit the care of his sister's happiness to one who he trusted would better secure it than he could now do.

"Will you come with me, dear Helen," said Charles, as they rose from the little tea-table, placed near the open window of the library, on the evening preceding the day of Helen's marriage. "Will you come with me to have one last walk together along the beach? My walks henceforth must all be solitary."

Helen's eyes filled with tears, as the sad tone of her brother's voice touched her affectionate heart. She lingered for a moment; leaning over his chair, and parting the dark curls that clustered round it, fondly kissed his brow, and then hastened to prepare to accompany him.

The evening was one of clear calm beauty.

It had rained heavily during the greater part of the day; and now, the dewy light of the parting sunbeams, as they glistened upon the gemmed foliage, the soft murmur of the tiny waves, and the subdued song of the birds, as they retired to rest among the branches, all seemed to speak of sadness blending with nature's repose, and harmonized well with the feelings with which Helen and her brother wandered together along the lonely sea-beach.

Their converse was all of bygone years. Each childish recollection of happy hours—each cherished remembrance of the parents whose love had blessed their life's glad morning, but who had long been numbered with the dead—was dwelt upon, until once more they seemed to live before them, and the present was almost forgotten in these visions of the past.

Every feeling of reserve was lost in that endearing communion; and night had closed around them, and the pale clear moon shed her soft light upon their path, before they thought of returning to the rectory.

Helen stopped as they entered the porch,

and pressing more closely the arm upon which she leant, "My own brother," she said, "permit me to speak, though it be but this once, to you, upon the subject nearest to my heart.

"If we disagreed upon minor points only, I would most gladly submit my judgment to be informed by yours, that we might again be as we have ever been, but one, in heart and in opinion. But it is not so, my brother; weak and erring as in myself I am, I know that it is the truth of God, and no mere human opinion that I speak, when I say that Christ must be your only Saviour, or he cannot be your Saviour at all. That you must lead your flock in the green pastures of his fold, or conduct them, blindfolded, by your own hand, down the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Ah, Charles, can you bear to think of that alternative?

"Yet I do not ask you," she continued, "to believe my words. I do not wish you to give heed because it is the sister who so fondly loves you who speaks; but I ask you for your own sake, and for the sake of the immortal

souls for whom, at the judgment-seat of Christ, you must render an account, to 'search the Scriptures whether these things be so?' and to receive only from God himself, speaking by his promised Spirit, and through his word, an answer to the awfully-important question, 'What is truth?'"

Upon the succeeding day, Helen became the wife of Henry Egerton.

Henry could only, at that time, remain one day absent from his parish duties; but he and Helen did not part from Charles without a promise on their part of returning to spend, at least, a few days with him before the close of autumn.

For some time after Helen's marriage, Charles felt very lonely. He missed continually the sweet smile and soft voice that used to welcome his return from his solitary walk, and the social converse that had refreshed him when his daily hours of study were over.

It was strange, too, that of all the remembrances of Helen, which engaged his thoughts, that which most vividly and most constantly

recurred, and which, yet, he would most willingly have banished, was the recollection of every word that she had uttered during their conversation upon the Sunday succeeding his ordination, and of her solemn and affectionate address upon the evening preceding her marriage.

He was engaged in these meditations one evening in the end of the harvest, when a message was brought requesting him to hasten to visit one of his parishioners, who had been suddenly attacked by violent illness, and was now supposed to be dying.

He rose immediately, and hastening to follow the little messenger who had called him, arrived at the cottage almost as soon as she had announced his approach. The sufferer was a woman of middle age. She had been remarkable during life chiefly for her honest and diligent habits, and for the regular attendance upon public worship, which she practised herself, and enforced upon the other members of her family.

The paroxysm of disease, ere Charles entered,

had passed, but the hand of death was upon her; and the rigid aspect of her features, and the icy coldness of the hand which she extended to her pastor, told that her hours were numbered.

"Thank you kindly, sir, for coming so soon," she said, as Charles approached the bed. "I have been wishing to see you, for I feel that my time is short, and I should like to receive the holy communion before I die." The necessary preparations were quickly made, and Charles read the Visitation of the Sick, shortening the service as much as possible, as the strength of the sufferer appeared to be rapidly sinking.

When he reached that part of the service, at which, if so disposed, the sick person may make confession of sin, he would have passed on, supposing the dying woman too weak to attempt it; but she laid her hand upon his arm, and feebly murmured, "I have something to say to you here, sir." By a strong effort, she rallied her remaining strength, and told of imperfections in duty, of failure in the external observances of religion; but no confession of inward

depravity was uttered, no mourning over the alienation of the natural heart from the Father of spirits.

Charles read the form of absolution, and a smile of relief brightened the countenance of the sufferer. "Now I feel more comfortable," said she. "I have often been troubled by fears, sir, of the safety of my soul, and to-day they have vexed me more than ever. But surely they are causeless. I was made at my baptism an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. I have never committed open sin." Her voice failed, and a sudden paleness overspread her features; her daughter-in-law hastened to administer a restorative, and she revived. "In your first sermon, sir, after you came here, you told us that we must do good works—that we were justified by the habitation of God's Spirit in us, producing these—and that we received this Holy Spirit through the sacraments of the Church, duly administered. Ever since that time, I have been more diligent than ever in doing all that I knew was right. And I have never missed a communion, sir, since you came

to the parish. Surely I am safe?" She looked up in Charles's face. The earnest gaze of her glassy eyes pierced his soul.

"I trust that you are, my good woman," he answered gently. "For your further assurance, I will now administer the holy sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God in his mercy will renew to you, by it, the pardon of your sins." All was now prepared, and Charles hastened to administer this most sacred ordinance, partaking of it, with the dying woman, and her children. When the service was concluded, Mrs. Brown continued for a few moments silently to rest upon her pillow. Her eyes were closed, and an expression of anxiety slightly contracted her brow.

"Thank you, sir," said she at length, opening her eyes, and again extending her hand towards Charles, who kindly clasped it.

She fixed upon his face that wistful, lingering look, which, he hardly knew why, again sent a pang to his heart. "*Surely* I am safe?" The words trembled upon her closing lips—she was gone.

Charles administered such comfort as he could impart to her distressed children, and then slowly and sadly returned to the rectory. A few weeks passed away, and as the evenings became longer, and the chill gloom of winter, advancing before its time, began to efface the lingering traces of the summer's bloom, Charles' sadness became daily more deep.

It was not his wont thus to feel loneliness so dreary. From his childhood, he had loved to be alone, and the bright fancies of his solitude had been dearer to him than the social converse that might have cheered him in the haunts of men. But now these happy musings were exchanged for gloomy thoughts and restless anxieties, that in his waking hours he strove in vain to banish, and which, armed with redoubled power in the darkness and silence of night, often disturbed his rest.

One stormy afternoon, late in autumn, as he was slowly pursuing his favourite walk upon the beach, and watching the restless motion of the waves with feelings that found in them more sympathy than in the calm woodland beauty

that he used to love, he came suddenly within sight of the cottage in which Mrs. Brown had formerly lived, and which was still inhabited by her son and daughter-in-law.

Perhaps if he had remembered that this sea-beach path led so closely past her door he would not have chosen it on that evening, for, he knew not why it was, but the sight of that cottage always awakened in his mind an undefined emotion of pain. And for some time, almost unconsciously to himself, he had generally, when walking upon the beach, turned his footsteps in the opposite direction.

But now he had come suddenly just before the cottage-door, and Mary Brown was standing knitting there, and watching her child as it played upon the beach ; and he could not avoid stopping, with his usual kindness, to inquire how she did, and to stroke the flaxen curls of her little boy.

" Would you please, sir, to step in for a few minutes ?" said Mary, timidly, as he was about to pass on. " I have wished, for a long time, to

“speak to you, sir, but I never could make bold to come to the rectory.”

“I should have been glad to see you there at any time, my good Mary,” said Charles, as he immediately turned, and accompanied her into the cottage. “Can I be of any use to you now?”

“I hope so, sir, for I have no one else in the world, who can set my mind at rest,” said Mary, her timid reserve giving way at once, as the gentle tone of his voice touched her already excited feelings. “I have been very miserable, sir, ever since my mother’s death, and not altogether because I have lost her either, though a kinder mother never lived. But I had never seen one die before; and to see her go, made me ask myself, ‘Am I ready?’ And then a word came to my mind, I do not know where I heard it, ‘Prepare to meet thy God;’ and oh, sir, I can get no rest day nor night, for I am afraid to die; and yet my mother was well and hearty, just the day before she had to go, and I do not know how soon it may come to me.”

Mary had rapidly poured forth all that she

had to say, as if thankful for this relief to her overcharged feelings ; but tears now choked her voice, and, covering her face with her apron, she wept bitterly.

“My good Mary,” said Charles, kindly, “you must not distress yourself thus. I hope you have no cause for this alarm. Remember your baptismal privileges. You have often repeated the words, ‘Wherein I was made a child of God, a member of Christ, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven ;’ think of these words to your comfort now, and remember the mercy of God.”

“Yes, I have thought of these words many a time,” said Mary, who had looked up when Charles began to speak, and continued drinking in his words as if hoping to find in them some cordial to revive her fainting soul. “I have thought of them, sir, when another word, a word that I had found in my Bible, troubled me—‘Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ Then I have thought, ‘But I was born again at my baptism ;’ but then another word that I found in the Bible came into my mind—‘If any man be in Christ

he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new;' and I feel in my very heart, sir, that I am not 'a new creature,' that all the old wicked things are in my heart still, and nothing has become new at all; so how can I be in Christ?" She asked this question with startling earnestness; and awaited Charles' reply, as if her very life hung upon his words.

"You are in Christ," he replied, "because your baptism made you so, and you have never, by any open sin, thrown yourself out of this relation in which you stand to God. You have received anew the forgiveness of sin through partaking of the Holy Eucharist; and if you do but go on as you have hitherto done, you have no cause to doubt, that by the dwelling of God in your soul producing good works, and obedience in your life, and for the sake of Christ you will be justified in His sight."

Mary looked still unsatisfied. "But, sir," she inquired hesitatingly, "it is said 'God is love;' if God then dwells in every soul, His love must dwell there, must it not?"

"It must certainly," replied Charles; "for only in His own character, can God dwell in any soul."

"Then," replied Mary, the expression of perplexity in her countenance passing away, but only to be succeeded by one of deeper gloom than before, "then, sir, God does not dwell in my heart, for His word says, 'Love not the world,' and 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' but the world has been my care all my life, and even now, if it were not for fear of death, I love the world better than I do my Maker. I know it is wicked; but for all that I do it;" and again Mary covered her face and wept.

"My good woman," said Charles, "your distress proceeds from a very common error. You are striving to understand Scripture for yourself, instead of submitting to the interpretation given of it by those whom God has appointed to be your instructors; and thus being as the Apostle has said, 'unlearned and ignorant,' you wrest the Scriptures to your own destruction. Be advised by me; submit to the teach-

ing of your spiritual instructors, receive on Sabbath next the Holy Eucharist for the comfort of your soul, and pardon of your sins. Remember that you are a member of the true Church of Christ, and you will soon obtain the peace which you would vainly seek while you occupy your thoughts with things too high and sacred for you to understand by your own unaided judgment."

He rose to go. "Good night, Mary," said he kindly, for he had spoken the last few sentences more severely than was usual with him, and he seemed to wish to soften the harshness of their tone. "I shall be happy to see you at the rectory, and give you at any time the interpretation which the Church deems the right one, of any doctrine which may perplex your mind."

Mary had risen too, and stood listening with a sort of fixed and half-bewildered attention while he spoke, as if trying to reconcile his words, with the previous, and still strong, convictions of her own mind. And he had already reached the threshold of her door, when

she suddenly exclaimed, "And, O sir, if I do this at your bidding, will you be answerable for my soul?" Mary's words fell on Charles' ear and heart unanswered; he had already said, "Good night," and he hastened onward without delay.

A few days after this conversation with Mary Brown, Helen and Henry Egerton arrived to pay their promised visit at the rectory.

Charles was doubly delighted at this time to see them, both from the pleasure of once more being with the friends he loved best on earth, and because their society interrupted the course of his restless, anxious thoughts.

After the first joy of meeting was over, Helen marked with pain the change that the few weeks which had passed since she last saw him, had wrought in her brother's appearance. "You look very ill, dear Charles," said she. "You are pale and thin, and seem exhausted after your daily labours are over, to a degree that I never saw in you before. You must come back with us to Ellerdale; change of air and a week of relaxation will do you good, before your winter labours commence."

"I gladly would go with you, Helen," replied Charles, smiling sadly, "but I must not desert my post. *You*, I am sure, would not ask this. My parish, you know, is at all times one the wants of which my greatest exertions hardly suffice to meet. And at this season, when the fishermen are returning from their summer voyages, and all the wanderers from our little hamlets are gathering to their homes, my labours, instead of being remitted, would need, if I had but strength to do what I would, to be redoubled."

Helen sighed, but did not urge her request. "But do not look so sad, my dear Helen," continued Charles, in a more cheerful tone. "I am quite well, though perhaps I may look a little worn out; and as there is now some remote prospect of my obtaining an assistant curate in spring, I shall look forward to placing the whole of my burden upon his shoulders, some fine April morning, and making my escape to the woods of Ellerdale."

"Selwyn," said Henry Egerton on the evening of the first Sunday after the arrival of him-

self and Helen at the rectory, "will you favour me with the explanation of the word 'Gospel?'"

Charles looked up a little surprised by the suddenness of the question.

They had both been reading. Charles, at least, had been reading with close attention, a volume of ancient theology; and if Henry had looked up very often during the last half hour from the pages of the book which lay open before him, and had gazed, yet not apparently at any particular object, from the window of the library, perhaps it was that the subject of his book was one that called for meditation, as he proceeded.

"I should hardly have expected you to ask the signification of so familiar a word," replied Charles, quietly; "good news, or glad tidings, is the meaning of the term."

"And that good news was the substance of the shepherds' song at the advent of our blessed Redeemer, was it not, my dear Selwyn?" inquired Henry, without replying to his friend's look and words of surprise; "and is announced also in the words of St. Paul, 'This is a faithful

saying, and worthy of all acceptance,' or, as the words of our Communion Service give the passage, 'worthy of all men to be received,' 'that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,' is it not?"

"It is so announced," replied Selwyn.

"Then let me recall to your remembrance, my friend," continued Henry, "the terms in which we have received our commission from the Lord Jesus himself—'Go ye into all the world, and preach the *gospel* unto every creature;' and let me solemnly ask you, my dear Selwyn, if you, an ambassador of that Saviour, have this day fulfilled the mission with which He has entrusted you? Have you fully and freely preached *His* gospel to the dying creatures who heard you?"

For a few moments Selwyn answered not. A deep flush passed across his cheek, and rose even to his brow, and his lips quivered, as he strove to speak. He rose, and walking to the open window of the library, stood there for a short time in silence; then by a powerful effort con-

quering the emotion which had so deeply agitated him, he resumed his seat.

"I have instructed my people as I deemed best for their advancement in holiness, and agreeably to the doctrines of Scripture as interpreted by many of the ancient fathers and by the holiest and most learned of our own apostolical clergy, Henry ; and I must in future wave your right to question me upon a subject in which I am answerable to God, and to those under whose spiritual authority He has placed me, and to those alone."

He did not await a reply, but rose and left the room.

He remained absent until the hour for prayer, but continued afterwards with his sister and brother until the usual time of their retiring to rest.

His manner was affectionate as usual to Helen ; courteous, but cold and reserved, to Henry ; and, though he conversed with forced animation upon topics suitable to the sacred day of rest, yet selecting those upon which

they could unite in sentiment, his thoughts seemed absent, and, for the first time, the little party separated at the close of the evening without regret.

When Charles entered the breakfast-room upon the succeeding morning, he found Henry already there. "Good morning, my dear Charles," he said, advancing to meet him, with all his usual frank cordiality of manner. Charles would have returned the salutation, merely, and then passed on to the library; for though in heart he had already repented of his unkindness to the friend whose earnest solicitude for his best interests had alone afforded an imagined cause of offence, yet the natural reserve and hauteur of his disposition, combined with his determination to avoid for the future such discussions as that of the preceding evening, would have held him silent, even while he longed to efface from Henry's mind the impression that he feared his words and manner must have made.

But Henry detained for a moment the hand he had taken, and said, in a tone of deep feel-

ing, "Forgive me, Charles, if my interest in you and in the souls committed to your care led to aught in my manner last night unauthorized perhaps even by a friendship so old as ours has been. The substance of what I believe to be the truth of God, I cannot wish unspoken." He paused, and seemed anxiously to await a reply.

The generous nature of Charles was touched, and he warmly returned the pressure of his friend's hand, while he replied, "It is I who ought to ask forgiveness, Henry ; for our old friendship may and does authorize you at any time, and in any manner, to afford me the benefit of your kind advice ; but can never authorize me so rudely and ungratefully as I did to repel it. Not as a matter of right, however, but of favour, I would ask, that the subjects which we regard in so different a light may be no more discussed by us ; at least not while we enjoy this short interval of each other's society."

CHAPTER III.

THE few days that yet remained of Helen and Henry Egerton's visit to the rectory passed quickly over, and Charles was once more left alone. But he had little time now for the indulgence of the melancholy feelings that had for a time been banished by the cheering presence of his two dear companions; for almost immediately after their departure a malignant fever broke out in his parish, and all his efforts were scarcely sufficient to furnish the needful attendance upon the sick and dying.

The deep consciousness of his awful responsibility as entrusted with the care of immortal souls, which, ever since the period of his ordination, had weighed heavily upon a heart to which habitual depression had been unknown before, now sunk upon his spirit with redoubled

power, while day by day he beheld one and another member of his flock pass from his care to meet the dread realities of the eternal world.

One evening as he returned weary and sad, from attending upon the deathbed of an aged woman, a letter was put into his hand by the servant who met him as he entered the rectory.

He recognised the well-known handwriting of his friend Egerton, and with an undefined hope of finding comfort from him, he hastened to break the seal.

"My dear Selwyn," Henry wrote, "in compliance with your request, I refrained while I was with you from any conversation upon the points, the vital points, I must call them, of doctrine upon which we disagree; but now I must, though it may be for this once only, claim the privilege which you conceded to me, and faithfully, openly, as I would desire to meet you without shame at the judgment-seat of Christ, speak to you, what I believe to be the truth of God. Not without prayer, not with-

out tears, my friend, do I address you. When I read your letter announcing to me the awful calamity which at this time is sweeping so many of your flock into eternity, my heart bled for them—and it bleeds now for you, Charles, when I think of what will be the anguish with which, should God in his mercy open your eyes to behold the light of truth, you will reflect upon the ruin you have wrought; yes, that *you* have wrought, for should we not call him who sealed the fountain committed to his care from the lips of the wretches who were dying of thirst around him, a *murderer*?—and what must he be called who seals from the perishing souls of men the fountain of living waters?

“‘But you do not seal this fountain,’ you say. You preach to the people, repentance, and forgiveness through the sacraments, and justification through the good works they are enabled to perform by the presence of an indwelling God; and with these you hold out, perhaps, a remote hope that through the Church and her appointed ordinances, they shall be

made partakers of the benefits of the atonement of our adorable Redeemer.

“ But, my friend, the people are *dying*. Hasten then—a *present* refuge must be provided. The door of the Ark must be opened *now*, or the flood will overwhelm them. And does the word of God afford no such refuge? ‘ Search the Scriptures’*—listen to what answer *God* makes, speaking by his inspired Apostles, to the question ‘ What must I do to be saved?’ ‘ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’† ‘ The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart: that is the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved’.‡

“ But are you still afraid to drink yourself, or give to your flock, of the ‘ fountain of the water of life freely?’§ Listen, then, again; for I would rather, my friend, speak to you in God’s words, than in my own. ‘ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath *no*

* John v. 39. † Acts xvi. 31. ‡ Rom. x. 8, 9. § Rev. xxi. 6.

*money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.**

“Look again at the direction of an inspired Apostle to the flock he was commissioned to feed; ‘As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.’† Would that Apostle, nay, would God speaking by him, have commanded his people to desire ought else than the food with which He had commissioned his servant to feed them?

“But I can imagine that you answer me, that ‘it is your desire to feed your flock with the sincere milk of the word; but that, afraid of trusting to your own interpretation of Scripture, fearful of being led, or of leading them astray by the possible errors of your own judgment, you adopt and communicate to them such interpretations of Scripture as are authorized by the writings of the ancient Fathers, or received by the Church from which you hold your ordination.’

“My friend, it was to no such fallible instructors that the Great Head of the Church com-

* Isaiah lv. 1.

† 1 Peter ii. 2.

mitted the task of guiding his servants 'into all truth.' And, I would speak it with reverence, has the Holy Spirit of God become a less willing or a less able teacher than He was, when He first descended to redeem the pledge of the glorified Saviour, and abide with his Church until He should have conducted the last of its members in safety to the presence of their Lord ?

"Or has the Father's promise failed?—and does He no longer give the wisdom that is from above, to those who desire it, nor bestow the blessed Spirit upon His children, even as a father hastens to supply his hungry babe with bread ?

"Ah no, my dear friend ; to each of God's redeemed family is freely given an 'unction from the Holy One, that they may know all things,' and they 'need not that any man teach them,' 'but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

* 1 John ii. 27.

“And the same infallible Teacher it is, who, accompanying the faithful declaration of the whole counsel of God, is willing to make your preaching, your instructions, a ‘ministration of life to the flock’ you are commissioned to feed, according to the words of our blessed Master, ‘He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.’* ”

“One word more, my dear friend, and I have done. If the human authorities upon whose testimony you so much rely, agree with the inspired word of God, their testimony is unnecessary. If they dissent from its true meaning—and we have already seen how the understanding of that may be obtained—the Word of Truth itself declares, that it is because ‘there is no light in them.’ †

“If you then adopt their witness as in any degree supplementary to that of the written word, how can you escape from the awful sentence denounced upon him who shall ‘add to the things that are written in this book?’ ‡

* John vii. 38. † Isaiah viii. 20. ‡ Rev. xxii. 18.

That such a sentence should ever be yours, my friend, may God in his mercy avert. And that the bitter remembrance of having misled immortal souls, to their everlasting woe, may never be added to the pangs of your dying hour, is the earnest prayer of your faithfully attached friend,

HENRY EGERTON."

Charles had finished reading Henry's letter, and had risen, and walked up and down for some time in the library; and now stood by the fire, leaning upon the high mantelpiece, when his servant, who never, except upon some urgent mission, at this hour intruded upon his master's privacy, knocked gently at the door. The knock was repeated, once and again, but Charles heard it not. The man at length softly opened the door, and advanced a step into the room. Charles started, and turned round. "I am sorry to disturb you, sir; but if you please, sir, Mary Brown is just dying, and her husband has come to ask you to go back with him and see her."

Charles listened as if trying to understand the message clearly. When it was concluded,

he pressed his hand for a moment upon his brow, but immediately regaining self-command, "You did quite right to call me, John," he said; "I shall be ready in a few moments." The man left the room, and ere he had time to deliver his message to Herbert Brown, Charles had followed him.

Mary Brown had been one of the earliest sufferers from the epidemic, which had attacked her in its most virulent form. Charles had known of her illness, and had twice visited her since its commencement, but she had been insensible at both of these times. It was a clear cold night, the moonbeams fell in one long stream of light upon the calm sea, and every sound was hushed save the ripple of the waves, and the sound of Charles's footsteps, as they swept the crisp hoar-frost from the grass of the fields over which their path lay.

Charles felt revived as the chill night air breathed upon his throbbing brow, and enquired with his usual calm gentleness of manner, whether Mary's recollection had returned since he had last seen her.

“It did not, sir,” replied her husband, “till to-night. Her mother and myself were sitting beside her, and keeping all quiet, for she was sleeping, and we thought may be that would do her good, when she opened her eyes and looked up at us, so calm and composed like. ‘My dear man,’ she said, ‘I am soon going to leave you. I am better now, and I thank God for giving me the power to speak and say farewell before I go; but the hand of death is on me, and what I have to say must be short, and quickly spoken. You’ve been a kind husband to me,’ she said, sir,” continued poor Herbert, whose grief seemed relieved by speaking of its source, “‘and now I thank you for all your kindness. I have just one thing more to ask. You’ll not refuse me, Herbert?’ ‘No Mary,’ I said, ‘I never refused your asking, and I’ll not do it now.’ ‘Well, Herbert,’ she said, ‘I ask your promise, that every day you’ll read a part of God’s holy word—that you’ll do that in the family—but more than that, that you’ll do it alone, and on your knees, and with prayer to God. Just one prayer, Herbert, and it won’t be hard to mind, ‘O Lord, give me thy Holy Spirit.’

Will you promise, Herbert ?' And she held out her hand, and looked in my face. I could hardly speak, for my heart filled when I looked at her ; but I tried, and said, 'I will, Mary;' and then she smiled and looked up, and her lips moved. I bent over her to hear what she said, and I could just hear the words, 'thy Holy Spirit to them that ask it.'

"She lay quiet after that for a while, and then she turned quite round, and said, 'Herbert, I should like to see Mr. Selwyn, before I die.' 'I'll run for him, Mary,' I said; 'but don't speak that way of dying, or you'll break my heart:' and with that I rose, sir, though I was loth to leave her, and came away for you."

By this time they had reached the cottage door, and Herbert softly raising the latch, they entered.

All was quiet within. The embers of the fire had nearly gone out, for the old woman had feared to stir them. A small lamp was placed upon the table, and shed its sickly light through the apartment; and near its dying mother's bed was placed the little cot of her infant, whose

glowing cheek, and the chubby hand upon which it rested, formed a contrast to the wasted form, where the slow measured breathing, and the expression that shone in the large upraised eyes, alone told that life still lingered.

Her husband and Charles softly approached the bed ; but she heard the sound of their footsteps, and turned her eyes towards them, as they drew near.

A mingled expression passed across her features as her gaze rested upon Charles ; she tried to speak, as he kindly took her hand, and enquired how she felt herself ; but only her lips moved.

Her mother raised her head and presented some drink to her lips ; it seemed to refresh her, and she spoke slowly, but with a distinctness and solemnity that sent every word she uttered home to Charles's heart.

"I made bold to send for you, sir," she said, "that I might tell you, now that I am on the very brink of the eternity I once so dreaded, what it is that can take away the sting of death, and enable the soul to appear without alarm before its God."

She paused for a moment, and looked rather anxiously towards her husband. "Herbert, I should like to be alone with Mr. Selwyn." He rose immediately, and retired into a small inner room, followed by his mother.

"Forgive a dying woman, sir," continued Mary, "if she speaks to you with more plainness than our different stations might warrant; but these distinctions are fast passing from my view, and I can think of nothing but the eternity upon which I am entering—and where you, sir, and all who are under your care, must soon follow me.

"You remember the day that I spoke to you, sir, in great distress about my soul? I did not find that anything you said or bade me do, was enough to make me look to a dying day without fear. When you left me, I was more miserable than before, for my last hope of comfort had been from you, and now I felt that 'refuge had failed me.' I threw myself on my knees; but I could neither pray nor weep, and hardly knew what I did, when suddenly a sweet word came into my mind, that I had heard read one day in the Sunday-school: "Come unto me, all

ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’* I wept then, but they were not bitter tears. I prayed too—and then I rose, and a load was lifted off my heart. I knew that Jesus had spoken these words, my heart had come to him, and He had given me rest. I took my Bible—I thought, ‘Am I safe?’ I was not quite satisfied, and turned over the leaves until I found the words, ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’† I was satisfied then, for I thought, ‘the Lord Jesus promised to give me rest, if I came to Him, and I found His word was true. Now He promises to give me everlasting life if I believe on Him, and I am sure that word must be true too.’”

Mary paused, her strength seemed exhausted, but she rallied it by a strong effort, and continued: “I have little more to say, sir; and if I had, the power to speak is ebbing fast away. I have found the word of my God true in life, I find it true in death, and blessed be his name, I know that I shall find it true in eternity. But

* Matt. xi. 28.

† John iii. 16.

there are others, as I once was, who are seeking a refuge from the wrath to come, others who fear to die. Oh! sir, as you would not have their souls' ruin on your head at the day of judgment, tell them, it is my dying testimony, that 'The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, unto every one that believeth.'''*

She ceased, and closed her eyes. Charles thought that life was departing, and hastened to call her husband. She revived a little as they stood around her bed; and, at Charles's request, her husband, leaning over her, enquired if she wished to receive the sacrament. She turned towards Charles as the question was asked, and distinctly replied, "Yes, as a seal and pledge of the free gift of salvation, through my Redeemer, I should wish to receive it 'in remembrance of Him.'"

The simple preparations necessary were quickly made; and Mary was supported in bed, while with deep humility, yet with lively faith in the work and word of her adorable Redeemer, she received the symbols of his dying love.

* Rom. i. 16.

When the service was concluded, she seemed much fatigued, and inclined to repose; and Charles left the cottage, having first requested Herbert to send for him at any hour of the night, if he could be of use or comfort in their distress.

The night passed undisturbed, and at an early hour of the morning Charles sent his servant to enquire how poor Mary had spent it.

He soon returned, and told that Mary had slept quietly for some hours; she had then awakened, but had not appeared to know any one around her. She had continued for a few minutes gazing earnestly upwards, her lips moving as if in prayer. Her husband had bent closely over her to catch her words, but he had only distinguished the last that she had uttered, "My Saviour—happy!" While the accents yet trembled upon her lips, her happy spirit had departed.

The servant finished his recital, and lingering for a moment, seemed to await some further remark or enquiry. His master merely said, "Thank you, John, you may go," and he withdrew.

"I thank Thee, O God, that she is safe," murmured Charles, when he was left alone. "May my last end be like hers."

Charles was called during that day, and for many succeeding days, to witness scenes of sorrow and bereavement that wrung his heart; but in the midst of all, the remembrance of Mary's death-bed dwelt in his mind like one solitary beam of light amidst the gloom; and again and again, as her serene countenance seemed still to smile before him, he breathed from his heart a thanksgiving that "she was safe."

The next victim to the malignant power of the epidemic was an aged woman, who had, for many years, been known over the neighbouring country, as a hawker of small wares, and whose character had been anything but good.

The disease in her had neither youth nor strength to contend with, and she soon sunk under its power, though it had attacked her only in its milder form, and she remained to the last free from delirium.

Her distress of mind was very great, and Charles remained by her side for hours,

endeavouring in vain to administer consolation. She listened indeed while he spoke, with the eagerness with which a drowning wretch would strive to catch the rope thrown out to save him; but she did not seem to understand his words, and yet, when he would have risen to leave her, she implored him to stay. "Will you leave me, sir, to perish in my sins?"

He had read the Visitation for the Sick. She had breathed to him, in hollow accents, the words of confession, and had listened while he repeated the form of absolution, as if she hoped that it, at least, would relieve her; but still she seemed restless and unsatisfied; and hardly knowing why he did so, except that they had been dwelling all day in his thoughts, Charles repeated the words, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* "Ah! what did you say, sir?" exclaimed the aged sufferer; "are these God's words?—repeat them, sir, again." He did so. "But I have been a great sinner—too great for God to pardon?"

* John iii. 16.

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” * repeated Charles, almost mechanically. “To save sinners!” exclaimed the old woman, suddenly clasping her withered hands, and raising herself upon the pillow; “Oh then, tell me, sir, will He save me?” She looked in Charles’s face, a gleam of hope just struggling with the despair that had reigned in her countenance before. But a sudden spasm came on, and ere his answer fell upon her ear, it was closed for ever in death.

* 1 Tim. i. 15.

CHAPTER IV.

THE violence of the epidemic had almost expended itself; for some days there had been no death amongst his parishioners, and all those who still suffered from the disease appeared to be recovering.

Charles had been all day engaged as usual in visiting the sick; and somewhat cheered by the hope that the scourge was now passing from amongst his people, he had begun to prepare a sermon for the succeeding day, a part of his ministerial duty to which, from necessity, he had lately devoted but a small portion of his time.

He had not proceeded far, when he heard footsteps advancing up the avenue, and the sound was immediately followed by a rather violent ringing of the bell at the hall-door.

It was quickly opened by his servant, and he

heard the sound, but could not distinguish the words, of rough voices from without.

The door of the library was not quite closed, however, and he distinctly heard the reply of his servant. "I cannot disturb my master to-night, he is engaged in his study ; and besides, would you have his honour to face this storm ? But I shall give him your message the first thing in the morning."

"And before morning our captain may have died like a dog," exclaimed one of the men angrily, whose words, for he had stept within the door, Charles could now distinctly hear.

He did not await his servant's reply, but hastily rising advanced towards the hall, and called aloud, "I am coming immediately, John ; bid the men wait."

"There now, I knew his honour would not refuse," muttered the man, as, in compliance with the half unwilling request of John, who continued jealously to watch their movements, he and his companions entered the hall, and stood near the stove, to dry their dripping garments, while John selected the cloak which

he thought would best protect his master from the inclemency of the night, wrapped it carefully around him, and then, arraying himself in a similar vestment, he stood, umbrella in hand, until the whole party had passed from the hall, when he followed, and carefully locking the door with a massive key, which he deposited in his ample pocket, muttering, as he did so, "The women will take no harm, till I come back," he hastened after his master.

For a few moments the sudden change from the light of the lamp and blazing fire which Charles had just left, to the almost total darkness without, and the beating of the heavy rain in his face, rendered it almost impossible for him to see his way, and he stumbled on after his guides, hardly knowing whither they were leading him.

They turned at length into a somewhat sheltered path, between two rocky head-lands; and Charles made use of the temporary calm, to enquire into the circumstances of the case he was called upon to attend.

He soon discovered that his companions were

two of the crew of a small trading—it was more than suspected, not always *fair-trading*—vessel, the captain of which had a house within the bounds of his parish, and he had lately observed him occasionally attending service in the church.

As his house was at a considerable distance from the rectory, Charles had not heard of this man having been attacked by the fever, from which the men who conducted him told him that he had been suffering for several days. “But we thought that he was getting better,” they continued, “till last night, when he would get out of bed, and try if he could walk to the beach ; and he fell just outside of his door, and we had to carry him to his bed again ; and he has been raving wild ever since, and calling out your honour’s name so often, that, at last, though the night be so stormy, we made bold to come for you ; for we were afraid he would never see the morning.”

The men had hardly finished their account, when, emerging from between the high rocks that had hitherto sheltered them, their path proceeded to lead them along the open beach.

The tide was high, and the foaming surge dashing against the rocky shore, covered them with torrents of spray; and sometimes sweeping entirely over the path, would have rendered it impossible, but for the aid of the hardy sailors, for Charles to proceed. "This is a night, to be sure, for his honour to come out, at the bidding of that lawless crew," muttered John, as he scrambled sometimes on all fours, along the dangerous path, all unheeded by the sailors. "They thought their captain would die before morning, indeed. I wish this night's work may not be my master's death; and that will be of more consequence, I'm thinking."

After a long and rather perilous walk, the little party arrived at length in front of the captain's house. It consisted of the keep and part of the hall of an old fortress which had once defended the point of land upon which it stood. The greater part of the building had long ago fallen to ruin; but the broken fragments had been carried away, and buttresses built to strengthen the old walls; and but for the gloomy errand upon which they had come, it would have presented a cheering aspect to them now, as the flag hoisted on the old

keep unfurled its heavy folds on the rising blast, and the bright fire within shone through the uncurtained window upon the white sea-foam, and gleamed on their path, while they drew near the captain's dwelling. One of the sailors knocked softly at the door, and it was immediately opened by an old woman. "I'm glad you're come," she said; "I've been looking wearily for you; for it's dreary work to watch by a dying man in this lonely place."

"How has the captain been?" enquired the man, in a low tone.

"Very bad, ever since you went away; and it has been frightful to hear the way he raved. But has the parson come back with ye?"—"Hush!" said the man, "he's here,"—and Selwyn stepped forward. The old woman curt-sied. "Will you please to walk up-stairs, sir?" John came forward and assisted his master to take off his dripping cloak, which the old woman hung before the blazing fire in the hall. She was thus engaged, when a loud, harsh voice from above, called out, "Margery, Margery, I say!—Jones! Oh, they have all

left me—left me alone with these mocking fiends!”

The old woman turned pale, but hastened to leave her task; and ascending the stairs as fast as her aged limbs would permit, followed Selwyn, and the elder of the two sailors, who had accompanied him.

An air of comfort, even of rude luxury, pervaded the room in which Captain Morven lay; and the blazing log fire shed around it a cheerful light and warmth, that seemed strangely inconsistent with the haggard looks and miserable ravings of its unhappy occupant.

Margery advanced to the bed.

“His honour the parson has come to see you, captain,” said she; “shall I bid him come in?” “The parson?” exclaimed the unhappy man, upon whom the lucid interval which his heavy sleep had procured him, seemed to have had no other effect than that of aggravating the anguish of his spirit; “No, no, I want him not. I do not need his smooth words, and hollow promises, to urge me faster than I am going already on the road to everlasting ruin. I

could not hear him crying, 'Peace, Peace,' for a voice louder than his is ringing in my ears, and telling me that there is no peace here, or hereafter, to the wicked."*

"Hush, captain," said the old woman; "his honour is just at hand,—he'll hear you."

"And let him hear me," said the wretched man. "It is but the truth I speak, when I say that he has helped to lead me blindfold to hell."

"But he's here, you say," he continued, after a short pause, with a calmness more appalling than his violence had been; "let him come to me then; and go out, go out, all of you, for I have something to say to him."

The old woman left the room, followed by Jones, first motioning to Charles as she passed to go near the bed.

He had stood, just within the door, riveted to the spot, and longing, yet unable, to hasten far from the sound of the words which smote his heart like an icebolt, as they fell from the lips of the dying sinner; but as the old woman and her companion withdrew, he approached

* Isaiah lvii. 21.

the bed, and mechanically seated himself in the chair to which Captain Morven pointed.

"Mr. Selwyn," said the dying man, speaking with a forced unnatural calmness of tone and manner, and fixing his cold piercing gaze, as he spoke, full on the countenance of Charles, "I have a few words to say to you—none to hear from you—and then our last earthly interview will be over.

"About two months ago, I was at sea on a fearful night. The waves were rolling mountains high, and the red lightning glaring athwart the black heavens, and the timbers of my barque groaned and creaked with the pressure of the seas that broke over her, till I expected every moment that she would go to the bottom.

"It seemed as if the wrath of God was let loose on the world He had made; and some words were haunting my mind, that I had learnt from the Bible in my youth—for I attended a Sunday-school, and knew the Bible well in my young days. The words were these, 'Children of wrath, even as others.'

“The storm passed, and we got safe to port, but the words would not leave my mind. ‘Am I a child of wrath?’ I asked myself, and day and night the fear of God’s wrath sunk heavier on my soul.

“At last I went to church. It was many a year since I had entered one before. I felt as if all the people were looking at me, and I went far away into a back seat. I had been long unused to read the Prayer Book, and I could not well follow it; but when you got into the pulpit, I listened, and thought, ‘Now I’ll hear something for my good.’ You opened the Bible and read the very words that had been haunting my mind. I listened; with all my soul I listened, for I hoped to get relief; and so I did. You told us, that we were born ‘children of wrath,’ but that our baptism made us ‘children of God.’ And then you spoke a great deal about keeping white our baptismal robes; and that, when we had committed sin after baptism, we must repent of it, and seek God’s forgiveness through the sacrament of the holy Eucharist, administered by one of His appointed servants.

“I went away greatly delighted. ‘Now,’ I thought, ‘I need not fear. I was by nature “a child of wrath,” but now by baptism, I have been made “a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” and I have received “forgiveness of my sins, and a new nature.”’

“For some time I was very comfortable in my mind ; but at last, I began to wonder how it was, that if I had a new nature, I did not love God, nor take any pleasure in the prayers and religious exercises that I had been carefully practising since I had heard you. I remembered then, something that you had said about sin, after baptism, being pardoned through the right reception of the Eucharist, and that you had warned us against falling away from our baptismal privileges ; and so I thought, that my seafaring life had led me into sin, and that this was the reason that I did not feel according to my new nature, and that if I rightly received the holy Eucharist, I should be forgiven, and all would be right.

“Determined rightly to receive it, I fasted and said many prayers for two or three days,

and even did penance—for I had heard you say something about that, and I was anxious to leave nothing undone; and on the morning of the Sunday after, I repeated the Confession with a loud voice, and drunk in every word of the Absolution, as you pronounced it, and then I came and received the Eucharist, and thought that all was well.

“I went another voyage after that. I had little time to think; but I read a prayer to my men every morning, and the service on Sundays; and I thought that the satisfaction I felt, in doing what was my duty, shewed that I loved God; and so I gave myself no further concern about the matter, till I came to this sick-bed—till death looked me in the face. And then, shall I tell you how it is with me now?”

He paused for a moment—then raising himself upon his elbow, he bent forward close to Charles, and spoke with a rapidity and vehemence that his weak frame had seemed wholly unable to sustain. “I have found the bed you had provided, too short to stretch myself upon, the covering you had offered too narrow to wrap myself in. Refuge has failed me—has

failed me—and I must stand before the judgment-seat of God alone. I have heard of a Saviour, but I know not where to find Him, and now it is too late. *You* have spoken of His name, but the rubbish with which you had choked up the path, hindered me from coming to Him, who could have saved me; and now, though the flood of God's wrath has swept away those refuges of lies, it has hidden the path too, that they had covered, and is bearing me downward to the pit of perdition. And now go—I have done.—No, not a word," for Charles was about to speak—to speak, alas! too late, of the gospel offer of a free salvation. "You cannot deceive me now." The unhappy man fell back on his pillow, and in a few moments was again raving in wild delirium.

Charles hastened from the awful scene. The sailors conducted him back as far as the pass between the rocks, and but for them, he would have been swept away by the rising of the surge; but what to him was the beating of the storm?—he heard it not—he felt it not. A wilder tempest was rending his bosom. A desolation more awful was wasting there.

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN MORVEN died upon the succeeding day; he continued delirious up to the moment of dissolution. He was the last of the victims to the fatal epidemic; and in a few weeks every thing in the parish had resumed its usual aspect of tranquillity.

The winter passed calmly on, unmarked by any change, save that the people, who had been increasingly attached to their curate ever since the time when he had so feelingly participated in their sorrows, and so fearlessly watched by their beds of sickness, observed with affectionate anxiety that the health of their beloved pastor was evidently sinking, and that his ministerial duties—which nevertheless were performed, if that were possible, with more unfailing assiduity than ever—seemed to exhaust him almost beyond the power of reaction.

Mr. Norton, the Rector of Linwood, paid a short visit to his parish at Christmas, and came most opportunely at that season, to aid his curate in the discharge of duties to which he would have been utterly inadequate.

Mr. Norton, who had been intimately acquainted with Bishop Selwyn, and felt a peculiar interest in the son of his old friend, was greatly shocked at the state of health in which he found him, and reproached him for not having sooner asked the assistance in discharging his duties, of which he evidently stood so much in need.

"I was anxious to labour while life was spared," replied Charles. "All that I can do now is too little to"—he paused.—

"You need not shorten your life by your labours however, my young friend," answered the Rector, kindly; "I shall send a nephew of mine, who has been leading an idle enough life with me for the last six months, to help you, as soon as I return to Wickenham. There will be room enough for you both, I dare say, in the old rectory, and I shall be glad that he

should be for some time with one who will set him so good an example of a clergyman's duty."

Agreeably to the Rector's promise, his nephew arrived at Linwood a few days after he had left it.

Charles recognized in him a fellow-student at Oxford, with whom he had been slightly acquainted, who had been ordained at the same time with Egerton and himself. Philip Morley seemed pleased by the kindness with which Charles received him, and acknowledged their former acquaintance,—and equally ardent and volatile in disposition, he soon warmly attached himself to his fellow-curate, while at the same time, in manner at least if not always in words, he unceasingly deplored his banishment at such a season of the year, "to a place as remote from civilized society as the wilds of Siberia."

"Not that I would leave you, my dear fellow," he continued, "even for town with all its gaieties, or the dear old hall at Esterleigh, and its Christmas merry-makings; but indeed, Charles, if you were not here, I would not

spend the winter alone in this old rectory, to be made Archbishop of Canterbury."

"My dear Philip," enquired Charles, seriously, "did you take holy orders, may I ask you, with the intention of spending your life in seeking your own amusement, or with the desire of consecrating it to the service of God in his Church?"

"Why, I believe I must confess that I had very little distinct intention of any kind upon the subject," replied Philip, slowly turning from the window from which he had been watching the heavy rain-drops as they fell upon the waveless sea, and throwing himself into a large easy chair by the fire, opposite to the table at which Charles was busily employed in writing a sermon for the succeeding morning. "I took holy orders because my parents wished it; and they wished it, I believe, because they have a large family; and as my uncle Norton has a good deal in his power in the way of advancing me in this profession, they thought that it would be a safe and sure provision for one of their sons. If their choice had fallen on my

mild, contemplative brother Edward, it would have suited his taste better, however, than it does mine."

"And has it never entered into your reflections, Philip, than in taking upon yourself, from whatever motives, the office of the ministry, you have assumed the awful responsibility of answering to God for the safety of the immortal souls committed to your care? You stand charged with this responsibility, whether you reflect upon it or not; and surely in such circumstances it would be well to think seriously how you may best discharge the duties of your sacred office."

"Poh, Charles, do not speak so solemnly. You have thought seriously in this lonely place, till you have moped yourself to death, and made yourself ill; and for me, it needs all my efforts, I assure you, to prevent my thoughts from being tinged with the sombre aspect of your leafless woods and dull grey sea.

"I read the service and administer the ordinances, my dear Charles, according to the Rubric, and do my very best, even when only

preaching in this Gothic land, in writing and delivering my sermons ; and moreover I observe myself, and shall try to make the people observe, all the fasts and feasts, from the first Sunday in January to the last in December ; and if they will go wrong after all that I do to make them go right, it will not be my fault at least, and so I shall not be responsible."

"Ah, Philip," replied Charles, mournfully, "though your people were to walk in all the ordinances of the Church, as blamelessly as your heart could desire, what good would it do to them, unless they believed in the Saviour, to whom all these are meant to lead?—and how can you point out to them the way to that Saviour, unless you know it yourself?"

"My dear friend," he continued very solemnly, after a short pause, "may you never need to be taught by the same bitter experience by which I have learned, that ordinances, forms, ceremonies are nothing, unless Christ dwell in the heart by a living faith ; and that a vital change in our own hearts, or in the hearts of our

people, is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, and cannot be produced by any external rite.

"Forgive me, my friend, but are you not yourself an illustration of the truth, that there is no virtue in the mere external ceremony of ordination?

"I appeal to your conscience—and God knows, Philip, that it is with deep humility, and only from interest in you, and in the flock committed to our charge, that I speak—has any change passed upon your heart or character in consequence of that rite?—or are you in any degree more qualified to act as the guide of others, than you were before you took holy orders?"

Philip coloured, but rose and walked in silence to a distant window.

Charles did not force the continuance of their conversation. He looked after him for a moment, then sighing deeply resumed his employment.

For some weeks from this time, heavy and frequent falls of snow blocked up the roads leading from Linwood, and rendered the rec-

tory almost inaccessible. But during this most inclement season, Philip Morley and John in vain united their entreaties that Charles would confine himself within doors. Every precaution necessary for the preservation of his health, he readily at their request adopted, save those which would have hindered the discharge of his duty to his flock, and here he remained inflexible.

"What is the use of my being here, Charles?" exclaimed Philip, one afternoon when Charles returned wet and weary, from visiting some of his sick people, and was reclining in a state of exhaustion, against which he no longer had power to contend, upon a couch by the fire. "You rarely let me preach for you; you will not let me visit for you; and my reading prayers spares you but a very small portion of the fatigue which is wearing you to death. Is this the way that you teach me to work, as it is evident you think a clergyman ought to do?"

"My dear Philip," replied Charles, speaking in a very low but impressive tone, as Philip seated himself by his side, "your being here is

not in vain, if it teach you, even by witnessing the bitter experience of another, to 'work while it is called to-day.' Yes, Philip, to me the night 'cometh when no man can work,' the night of death—and I must leave my flock, those whom I ought to have fed with the bread of life—those whom I ought to have led to the green pastures of the Good Shepherd, I must leave them wandering in the pathless desert."

He paused for a few moments, greatly agitated, but soon succeeded in regaining composure. "Ask me not then, for the sake of prolonging my worthless life a few days or weeks in a chamber of sickness, to desist, while strength is given me, from the efforts that have been neglected too long, to gather my sheep into the fold of Christ."

Again he paused much exhausted, and continued for a short time to rest in silence. He looked up at last, and met the affectionate gaze of Philip, fixed upon his countenance with an expression of sadness very foreign to that which his features usually wore. He smiled faintly: "You are both of use and comfort to

me, dear Philip; think how lonely I should have been but for you in this old rectory, with every road to it blocked up by snow. And your reading the morning and evening service is of greater use to me than you imagine, for it allows me to reserve the whole of my strength for the sermons, which otherwise I should not be able to preach."

"I know well the reason, Charles, that you will not, when you can help it, allow me to assist you by preaching," replied Philip, in a half hesitating tone. "It is because you think I do not understand the Bible well enough myself, to explain it to others, is it not?"

"I will not deny it," replied Charles; "now, Philip, I am too near eternity, to risk deceiving your soul, even though I should offend you."

"You do not, cannot offend me, Charles, say what you will," interrupted Philip, earnestly.—Charles continued: "I must ask you then one very solemn question; do not answer it to me unless you choose, but answer it to God and to yourself. Does conscience—I do not speak of the opinions which with but slight examination

you have adopted, because you think that it sounds well to be called a high churchman, and because the importance which these principles attach to outward observances to forms and ritual, and Apostolical succession, afford some refuge, both for your own soul's felt need of a foundation upon which to build your hopes of salvation, and for your desire to guide the flock, about whose eternal safety you are not quite indifferent, into some path which you endeavour to persuade yourself will lead both them and you, without much trouble, to heaven? Yes, I see that I have rightly read the state of your mind, and that though you do not willingly acknowledge such sentiments to be your own, and would rather that they had been left, covered with all the panoply of sacred forms, and high-sounding names, in the recesses of your mind, yet that you cannot quite disown them when thus dragged to light, and placed before you. It is not then to these that I would appeal, but it is to the secret deep convictions of your heart, to that conscience which is as the voice of God in the soul, when I

ask you whether you do understand enough of God's method of salvation to man, to venture into eternity relying upon its truth alone, or to lead those committed to your care with you to the judgment-seat of Christ, assuring them from God's word, that the refuge to which you have directed them, will prove sufficient to shield them too, from the wrath of God, when it shall overwhelm the world of the ungodly?"

Charles paused—the earnest anxiety with which he had spoken seemed to have banished for a time the exhaustion of his frame; and his cheek glowed, and his eye shone with almost unnatural brightness, as he fixed its piercing yet affectionate gaze upon the countenance of his friend.

Philip seemed to shrink from the scrutiny—yet his flushed cheek and downcast eye told that he had not listened without emotion.

"This long conversation, when you have already spoken so much this morning, will be sure to injure you, Charles," he exclaimed at last, suddenly rising. "And I shall never for-

give myself if I have done you harm." He stood for a few moments near the fire, his face turned away from Charles—and then left the room.

CHAPTER VI.

THE snow continued for some time to blockade every avenue to the rectory.

With the aid of a well-stored library, and a flute, Philip managed to get over the mornings, which Charles always spent in his study alone, without any very intolerable degree of ennui; and about the middle of the day they generally went out together to visit the hamlets and scattered cottages of the parish, confining themselves in the most ungenial days to those in the neighbourhood of the rectory, and extending their walks when the wintry sun afforded them his rare beams, to the remoter boundaries of the parish.

Philip, it is true, on these occasions was rarely more than a listener, but it gave him satisfaction to think that his strong arm afforded some support to Charles' enfeebled frame;

and Charles was not unwilling that even in this way Philip should become acquainted with the people, who would probably at no very distant period be left entirely to his care. But the evenings were the seasons that of all the day Philip enjoyed most. When the curtains were drawn, and the lamp placed on the table, near the brightly blazing fire, and he saw Charles, his labours for that day at least over, resting upon the easy chair, or couch, by his side—then Philip forgot that he was in a lonely old rectory, far from all the things that he had been accustomed to consider necessary to his happiness, and entered with increasing zest into the pleasures, new, but not uncongenial to him, of intellectual conversation ; or when Charles was too much fatigued to be able to converse, of reading aloud to him, works upon various subjects, chiefly theology or science, which derived new interest from the occasional observations made by Charles upon their contents.

“Tell me, Charles,” said Philip upon one of these occasions, “what you meant by saying

to me that I do not understand the Holy Scriptures. You have taught me to think more upon these subjects than I ever did before ; and I cannot deny," he added, after a short pause, "that though I felt proud and angry at first, when you said so, yet my own conscience responded to the truth, that I could not venture into eternity without fear, resting upon the truths of God's word, and that I could not say from my heart to the people under our care, 'Come with me, follow in the path in which I lead, and you will be safe.' Yet I cannot understand why it is so, because I think that I do understand the Bible, and I am sure that I try to teach what I believe to be the way of salvation."

He paused for a moment. Charles did not immediately answer, for he was engaged in silent prayer, that the blessed Spirit of truth might enable him to reply to his friend in the words of that wisdom which cometh from above—and Philip added thoughtfully, "Yet I am sure, that I am much more anxious to teach the people rightly, and much more afraid of

leading them astray than I was when I came here."

"My dear Philip," replied Charles, "you think that you understand the Bible.—May I just ask you then what you believe to be the meaning of this passage, 'The natural man understandeth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'"

"That passage is applied to those who are without the pale of the Church of Christ, who have never by baptism been made the children of God, and who even if they can *read* the words of Inspiration, must be strangers to their right interpretation," answered Philip.

"And you think that they cannot therefore apply to you," said Charles; "but the force of that argument will be weakened, my dear Philip, if we can find that the word of God speaks of baptism, and of that union to Christ by faith, wherein our adoption as children of God consists, not as terms used indiscriminately to denote the same thing, but as terms used distinctively, the one to denote the change

which passes upon the spiritual condition of the man thus united to Christ—the other to denote the outward sign of that inward grace; and further that the holy Spirit is given in connexion with faith, and *not* in any degree of *necessary* connection with baptism. Nay, that in the exercise of that infinite love, which planned from eternity the restoration of fallen man, the blessed Spirit is himself the bestower of that spiritual life, the first act of which is to enable the soul to believe in Jesus as all its salvation.”

Charles rose, and took from his desk a copy of the Holy Scriptures; and placing it before Philip, he drew his chair near him, and laying his hand upon the closed volume, said very solemnly, “I am not going to enter with you, my dear Philip, into the mazes of argument. I am quite aware that the delusive sophistry, with which in the present day Satan has succeeded in blinding so many minds, to their eternal destruction, unless God in his mercy prevent, is such as no mere human reason can successfully combat. The word of God is the only

armoury from which, depending upon the promised aid of the Spirit of Truth, the follower of the Lord Jesus may hope to be supplied both with the shield which shall defend himself, and with the sword which shall pierce through the panoply of error. I would therefore simply lay before you the testimony of this blessed word of truth, and ask you, since you believe that you understand it, to take its declarations in their plain and obvious sense; and if you find that your experience does not correspond with them, that you will not be satisfied to leave it as a matter of doubt, whether your immortal soul be safe or not."

Philip did not answer, but listened with deep attention as Charles spoke. "We are first, then," continued Charles, after a short pause, "to endeavour to ascertain from the word of God by what means we are united to Christ, and thus made the subjects of regeneration, justification, and all the benefits of his redemption—by faith? or by the sacrament of baptism?" Charles opened the sacred volume at the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, and

pausing for a moment, solemnly implored aloud the teaching of the Divine Spirit, to enable them to understand aright the words of Inspiration. He then read the 12th and 13th verses: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." He then turned to the 3rd chapter of the same gospel, and read the 16th and 36th verses: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him:"—and to the 5th chapter, from which he read the 24th verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life:"—then to the 6th chapter, reading from

the 35th to the 40th verses inclusive: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day:"—and lastly from the 54th to the 57th verses of the same chapter: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the

living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

"That a spiritual eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ—in other words, a receiving of, or believing in Him, as the one sacrifice for sin, are here signified," said Charles, "is sufficiently proved by the explanatory observations of our Lord himself, in the concluding part of the chapter, 63rd and 64th verses: 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.' And though I have selected but a few verses from a multitude of similar declarations, with which the word of God abounds, surely, dear Philip, even these are sufficient, when we regard them as the words of the God of light and truth, to establish the fact, that it is through faith that we are united to Christ; and that it is by means of the simple spiritual

receiving of, and believing in Him, as our only and sufficient Saviour, that we become partakers of all the benefits of his redemption."

For a few moments Philip did not answer, but seemed to be engaged in thoughtfully considering the passages of the Holy Scriptures to which Charles had directed his attention. He then turned to the 16th chapter of St. Mark's gospel, and read the words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "How do you explain this verse, Charles?" he enquired.

"I explain that, and all similar passages of Scripture," replied Charles, "by saying, that 'Baptism is the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace;' and that the reason why the sign and the thing signified are thus sometimes spoken of in connexion, may be, that there would be (and especially in those days, in which submitting to the rite of baptism exposed men to reproach and contempt) good reason to suspect the *sincerity* of that man's profession of faith, who by refusing thus openly to cast in his lot with that of the Redeemer and his people, afforded

an evidence that the love to Christ, and to his brethren, which is the first fruit of true faith, had never been awakened in his heart. But this connection of faith with its open profession, does not affect the force and clearness of the repeated declarations, that faith alone is necessary as an instrument of justification ; nor does it infringe upon the equally clear and explicit evidence which we shall now go on to consider, that faith and the rite of baptism are distinct one from the other, and that the gift of the holy Spirit is bestowed in connexion with the former, and *not* in necessary connection with the latter.”

Charles then opened the Bible at the 8th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and read from the 36th to the 38th verse : “ And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water : and the eunuch said, See, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still :

and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him:”—He then turned to 1 Corinthians xii. 3, and read the words: “No man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” “Taking the confession of the eunuch’s faith, in connexion with this declaration,” said Charles, “we see that he must have received the gift of the holy Spirit, *before* he was baptized; and also that in every instance that Holy One must be, not only given in connexion with, but must be himself the source of justifying faith; and therefore when we find in this and other instances, that faith for the acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord, declared here to be the work of the holy Spirit, was given *before* baptism, which was afterwards administered as a sign and profession of the change already wrought; we are fully warranted in believing that this inward and saving change is not necessarily connected with baptism; and in this belief we are borne out by the express declaration of the holy Scriptures. Acts of the Apostles 10th chapter 44th verse to the end:

‘While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.’ ”

“But your arguments, Charles,” said Philip, “apply chiefly to adult baptism. May not an infant who is incapable of exercising the faith of which you speak, be regenerated by the sacrament of baptism?”

“Certainly not *by* the sacrament of baptism,” said Charles. “To believe that the rite possesses, in *any* case, an inherent power of communicating the benefits of redemption, would be to deny the words of our Lord, which we have already considered: ‘It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.’

God may, and in the case of those who die in infancy, I believe He *does*, in his tender compassion, regenerate the unconscious subject; for even with regard to infants, his declaration must stand:—‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ But here, as in the case of adult baptism, the inward grace and the outward sign have no *necessary* connection. The idea that they have, would oblige us to assume on the one hand, that all unbaptized infants are lost, and that God, ‘who willeth not that any should perish,’ in the full knowledge that multitudes of the human race should die before the age at which they should be capable of choosing good or evil, had left his word without one single positive command to secure to infants the benefit of that rite, without which they could not be saved. And on the other hand, such a belief would force us to adopt the equally unscriptural conclusion that those whom we daily see walking in open defiance of the laws of God, and pouring contempt and dishonour upon his name, are never-

theless his adopted children, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love him."

"No," interrupted Philip; "the doctrine of baptismal regeneration does not oblige us to adopt the latter belief. A baptized person such as you describe, may have fallen away from the state of grace in which by this holy rite he once was placed; or though regenerate, he may not have been sanctified."

"To suppose that he who was once a child of God and an heir of heaven, who had been reconciled to God, and had received a new nature, and admission to all the benefits of the atonement of Christ—in one word, who has been born of the Holy Spirit into the family of God, may again become a child of wrath, an heir of hell, an enemy to Him who was once his Father in heaven, and an outcast from all the blessings and privileges of that Father's ransomed family, would be to deprive the trembling believer in Jesus, of a most precious ground of consolation," replied Charles; "and to deny the obvious sense of many direct assurances,

that once united to Jesus, his people are safe in him for ever."

He again opened the Bible, and read from the 6th chapter of St. John's gospel, the 39th to the 58th verse; and the 5th chapter at the 24th verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." He then turned to the 10th chapter of the same gospel, and read aloud the 28th verse: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand:" and to the 8th of Romans, from which he read the 30th verse: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." He paused; "These are but a few of the passages of scripture, which prove the everlasting safety of those who are once united to Christ.

"Of the other most untenable position, that

there can be regeneration, not necessarily followed by sanctification; it is opposed to the whole substance and meaning of Scripture, which speaks throughout of but two states,—that of a child of God, sanctified by his Spirit, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and that of a child of wrath, living in sin, and under sentence of eternal death. Compare John 3rd and 6th, with the 8th chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Study at your leisure and with prayer, these portions of the sacred record, dear Philip: and may the Spirit of truth enlighten and bless you.”

Charles stopped—he had been speaking with an earnest solicitude, that had carried him beyond the bounds of his physical strength, and a sense of exhaustion now rendered him unable to proceed. Philip was alarmed by the paleness which overspread the countenance of his friend, and hastened to support him to his couch, and offer a restorative. Charles soon in some measure revived. “I am better now, dear Philip,” he said, “but I believe I must retire to rest.” Philip accompanied him to the door of

his room. "Can I help you, Charles?" "No, thank you, Philip; I shall rest sooner if I am quite alone. Good night, my dear friend; may the Lord be with you."

Philip wrung his hand, but turned away without speaking.

"I shall lose the best friend that I ever possessed, if Charles should be taken from me," he said, as he slowly and sadly descended the stairs; "I wish I were more worthy of him."

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Philip awoke next morning, he felt oppressed by that undefined emotion of sadness, which is sometimes experienced before the mind has fully resumed the consciousness of its cause. Memory soon, however, too faithfully presented the pale exhausted countenance of his friend; and the fears for Charles's life, which, as often as they had before suggested themselves to his thoughts, he had resolutely banished, now returned with a power that would not be repelled.

He rose, and endeavoured, by busying himself in his room, to dispel the sad images which were crowding upon his mind.

He lighted his fire, and arranged his books and lamp in order, and tried to read; but the effort was vain, and after having for some time unsuccessfully endeavoured to concen-

trate his thoughts upon the volume before him, he pushed his table aside, and throwing open his window, looked out upon the scene that was slowly becoming visible in the grey dawn of morning.

The air felt milder than for many weeks it had done, and the heavy fall of drops of water and pieces of half-melted snow, from the eaves of the house—the only sound that broke the stillness which reigned around—told that the long-wished-for thaw had at length begun.

“The roads will be open now,” said Philip, as he turned from the window. “If Charles will not write to ask his sister to come to him, I shall. But this change to mild weather will do him good. I dare say he will get quite well as the spring advances.”

He seated himself again by the fire, and endeavoured to recall every thing that Charles had said upon the preceding evening.

He could not distinctly remember the substance of the verses which he had quoted, and turned over the pages of his Bible to find them. He found much to engage his atten-

tion, that he had not only never understood, but had never observed before. And he was deeply engaged in reading the words of Inspiration, when he was summoned to join the little group in the library, at their early family devotion.

Charles was looking better than he had expected; and hope, ever buoyant in Philip's mind, once more almost succeeded in banishing his apprehensions. They had been too serious however to be quite so easily dispelled; and as they seated themselves at their little breakfast table, he said, "The roads will soon be open, if this thaw should continue; will you not write and ask Mr. and Mrs. Egerton to come and visit you?"

Charles looked up with a half smile upon his countenance; "Why do you wish them to come, Philip?" he enquired.

Philip did not immediately answer; and as Charles read the sad expression of features, that were a faithful index of his feelings, the smile passed from his own, and he continued seriously, but very gently,

"I see your reason, my dear Philip;—you cannot any longer, though you gladly would, shut your eyes to the conviction that if there be still some reason to hope that a naturally good constitution, and the return of genial weather, may enable me regain the health which, for so many months, has been declining, there is also much reason to fear, that disease has progressed too far to admit of eventual recovery. And you wish that my dear sister and brother should be here, to consult with you upon the means most likely to benefit me?"

"I do wish that they were here," replied Philip. "I think that perhaps their persuasions might induce you to spare your strength, more than mine can do; or that, should the weather permit of it, you might accompany them to Ellesmere, or to any other place likely to afford you benefit from change of air; but I do not think your illness so dangerous, dear Charles; you only want rest, and mild weather, and you will soon, I trust, become quite strong again."

"It may be so, Philip," answered Charles; "the future is in the hand of God; but for several weeks I have felt increasingly convinced that I shall not recover, though Dr. Mowbray does not agree with me. Like yourself, he hopes much from the return of spring. I agree with him so far, however, in thinking that mild weather may produce a temporary revival; and as there does not seem any cause to dread an immediate change, of an alarming nature, in the state of my health, I would rather delay for a few weeks, asking Helen and Henry to visit me. Helen's health has been very delicate during the winter, and I would not unnecessarily expose her to the fatigue of travelling at this season of the year; and yet I know that were they aware of my illness, they would not be persuaded to delay."

"I should not feel it right to be thus silent," he continued, after a few moments of thoughtful reflection, "if my doing so involved the neglect of any means that, were they here, I should use for the restoration of my health, or the danger of making the blow fall more hea-

vily when I must tell them that I am ill; but I think that it does not.

"The climate of Linwood is perhaps the best for me, that England could afford; and by delaying to see them, until the advance of spring may in some measure have restored my strength, I may spare them much that they would feel, should they visit me now."

"But enough upon this subject," he continued, as they rose from the breakfast table; "will you come with me for half an hour to the library? While the subject is yet fresh in our minds, I should like to finish the conversation which my weariness interrupted last night."

"I will gladly do so," replied Philip, as they entered the library. "I have been reading this morning the passages to which you referred; and those which speak of justification by faith, are certainly very clear and conclusive; but when I attempted to form a judgment upon the meaning of the various portions of scripture which seem to bear upon the doctrine of final perseverance, I felt confused, and

dissatisfied. I begin to think," he continued, after a short pause, looking doubtfully up in Charles's face, "that perhaps I do not, so well as I had imagined, understand the Bible."

Charles's countenance brightened. He was silent for a few moments, during which a mingled prayer and thanksgiving to the Spirit of truth arose from his heart, and then he answered: "Confine your attention for the present, my dear Philip, to those portions of the word of God which treat of justification by faith. The Holy Spirit has indeed undertaken to guide the enquiring mind into all truth; but it is as he is able to bear it; and the first truth which He enables the understanding and heart to receive' (for it is 'with the heart,' Philip, and not with the intellect alone, that 'man believeth unto righteousness,') is, that 'whosoever believeth in Christ, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.' This treasure must be first received, and then you must continue to wait upon the same blessed Spirit, to unfold to you the exceeding

value and extent of all the benefits comprised in this 'gift of God.'"

Charles paused for a few moments. Philip continued thoughtful and silent, yet the perplexity which had shaded his brow seemed gradually passing away.

"We began our conversation, my dear Philip," continued Charles, "by endeavouring to ascertain to whom the description applied of 'the natural man,' who 'understandeth not the things of God.' And you imagined that such a description could only apply to an unbaptized person, one who had never by this initiatory rite been made a member of the visible church of Christ, on earth. But since by your own confession, my dear friend, you admit that it is possible for one who has been thus duly received into the communion of the visible church, to fall away from his baptismal privileges, and subject himself again to the penal sentence of God's broken law, the practically important point which it remains for you to decide, is, not whether you have ever been 'a child of God, and an inheritor of the

kingdom of heaven,' but whether you are so now. The Bible affords texts by which we may ascertain the position we hold in relation to the Author of our being—the God of our salvation. 'Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious.'* Is Christ precious to you? 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'† Does the world, or does God, hold the supreme place in your heart? 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we call, Abba, Father.'‡ Can you from your heart thus address the holy God? I do not ask you to answer these questions to me, my dear Philip; but solemnly, as in the sight of God, to examine your own heart, and answer them to Him; and if you cannot answer them satisfactorily, then remember that only by the power of the Holy Spirit can you 'call Jesus, Lord,' that only if 'led by the Spirit' can you be 'the son of God.'§ Ask your Father in heaven to give you that blessed

* 1 Peter ii. 7. † 1 John ii. 15. ‡ Rom. viii. 15.

§ Rom. viii. 14.

Spirit to be your guide into all truth, and you shall prove to your eternal joy the faithfulness of His promise to 'give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him.'”*

“But if I even intellectually understand the Bible,” enquired Philip, thoughtfully, after a few moments' silence, “could not I teach the truth to my people, and so avoid the danger of misleading them?”

“Our blessed Lord has himself answered that question for you,” replied Charles: “‘Can the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?’† And remember that He was here (compare Matt. xv. 14,) alluding to the Pharisees, who were well acquainted with the letter of the Jewish Scriptures. No, Philip, a mere intellectual knowledge of the book of God, may enable you indeed to be a minister of the letter; but the Author of that word of life, can alone make you an able minister of its spirit, and ‘the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.’”‡

Philip did not reply. Charles was silent for

* Luke xi. 13. † Luke vi. 39. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

a few moments, and then said very solemnly, "There is another consideration, my dear Philip, that, as in the sight of God, I would press upon your conscience. Did you not, at your ordination, solemnly declare, that you believed yourself moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon yourself the office of the ministry? and can you believe that God would commit 'the word of reconciliation' to one who was himself unreconciled?—that He would by His Spirit call you to be 'an ambassador for Christ,'* before that Spirit had taught you to 'call Jesus, Lord'? If not, then does the guilt of most fearful perjury rest upon your soul. Then have you taken upon yourself, without warrant, the charge of the immortal souls Christ died to save, and undertaken in your own unassisted strength to answer for the safety of those, whose blood, should they perish by your means, God will require at your hand."

Charles seemed deeply moved as he spoke; and when he had finished, he rose and re-

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

tired to his room, where he remained alone, until the usual hour arrived for visiting the sick.

For some weeks the weather continued mild and dry. Charles seemed to revive under its genial influence ; and Philip forgot all his fears, as he marked the returning hue of health upon the cheek, and the increase of strength in the footstep of his friend.

They often rode together to the utmost boundary of the parish, every part of which they frequently and regularly visited; and their walks and rides afforded constant opportunities, of which, with increasing eagerness, Philip availed himself, for conversation upon the leading doctrines of Scripture.

To Charles's sermons too—for it was very rarely that he devolved upon another that part of his duty—Philip listened with deep attention; and in after years his own seemed to those who had been under the ministry of both, to have been modeled upon the pattern of the free and full declaration of the gospel of salvation—the earnest setting forth of Christ crucified, in all

the beauty of His character, and in all the suitableness of His offices to the sinner's wants, which now, day after day, he heard poured forth from the lips and heart of his friend.

"I don't know how it is, John," said Herbert Brown, as he walked slowly along the church-yard path, with Charles's servant, one bright Sabbath evening about the end of March, "I don't know how it is, but Mr. Selwyn's sermons are quite different from what they used to be, when he first came here. Not but what they were very fine then, to be sure, though we could not make them very well out; but what we did understand, that we were to be regular in going to church and to the sacrament, and about our privilege in being members of the Church, and our duty of keeping our baptismal vows, was all very well; and I am sure many of us tried to understand and do all we could, and some did a great deal;—there was my own poor mother, a more regular church-goer never lived, and every month she took the sacrament, and taught us children the collects and catechism, but I never could see that her religion made her happy.

Poor woman, I hope all's well with her now, though my Mary died far more comfortable like,"—and Herbert stopped, and brushing away a tear with the back of his hand, walked on for a little in silence.

"I could name a good many too, that went over to the methodists in the next parish, because they said they got more comfort from their minister. However some of them have come back since our parson began to preach so much about Christ, and simple like that they could understand."

"Master was always kind and good, and fond of his books, and thoughtful from a boy," said John; "but I can't say but I've noticed a great difference upon him this some time past. You must know—but I'll not keep you walking up and down here, Herbert," continued John, interrupting himself as they stopped for a moment at the churchyard gate—"Your mother and the babe will be wearying for you home; so as the evening's fine, I'll just step round with you by the sea-beach, and finish what I was going to say. Well," he continued, as they

passed from the church-yard, and turned down the shady path leading to the beach, "you must know that I had lived with a family that were uncommon careless, while master was at Oxford ; but I had been about him from a child, and he had always promised—' John,' he had said many and many a time, ' as soon as I get a curacy you shall come and live with me again.' 'That I will, and thankful, master,' said I, for I was never satisfied in my mind while I was away from him. So when he got this curacy, I came here ; and Miss Selwyn, bless her, and I, had all ready when he came : and if you had but seen how different the old place looked from what it had done when *we* came to it!—however, that was not what I was going to tell you. After master came home, he called me to him one day, and ' John,' he said, ' this will not do,' (because I had made an excuse for not being at church in the morning, that I had the horses to look after, as the boy was new ;) so he spoke to me very serious like, ' that I had a soul to save ; and had I not promised at my baptism to renounce 'the world, the flesh, and

the devil,' and had I not been made a child of God then, and was I living like one?' and a great deal more; and I was vexed that master wasn't pleased with me, and afraid too, when he spoke so solemn. And so I tried hard to do all that he bade me, and went to church, and to the sacrament, and read my Bible, and did all I could; but, oh! Herbert, it wearied me sorely, for I had no heart to it. At last master began to preach differently, I thought, and his instructions to us servants were different too; so I waited for a bit, and then I made bold, and said one day,—for as I told you, I had been about him from a child, and could speak my mind in a way to him,—‘Master,’ I said, ‘I think I understand you better on Sundays when you preach, than I used to.’

“‘John,’ he said, and he spoke very serious, ‘I hope God has taught *me*, by his Holy Spirit, to understand His word better than I did; and so, to explain its true meaning better to others.’ He stopped for a bit, and I was going away, but he called me back; ‘John,’ he said again, ‘I tried to teach you how you

might 'work the works of God ;' but I should have taught you what is the *first* work that God calls you to do, the work that must be performed before you can do any other, so as to please Him,'—and then he took out his Bible, and shewed me this verse—I learned it afterwards, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.'*

" 'You have been much more regular in all your duties, John,' he went on to say ; 'but tell me, do you take any pleasure in them, or do you love God any better than you used to do ?' So I said, 'No, master, I cannot say as I do ; I'm often very wearied of my duties.'

" 'And do you think that God can take any pleasure in your reading His word or going to church while you are wearied of His service all the time ? or will He count it prayer, when your lips just repeat the words, and your heart is far from the God you are speaking to ?'

" So I didn't answer, for I knew that he was right. Then he asked me, 'Do you think you

* John vi. 29.

can make your heart love God, John, and take pleasure in serving Him ?’

“ ‘No, master,’ I said, ‘I’m very sure I can’t, for I’ve tried many a time.’

“ ‘What will you do then?’ he said; ‘for if you go to hell when you die, you will be miserable for ever; but if you go to heaven, where God is always served, without loving Him, you will be miserable there too!’ So I said nothing for a little, and he waited. At last I said, ‘If I could learn to love God, master, I suppose I should take pleasure in serving Him, but I don’t know how.’ Then he took out his Bible again, and read this verse, ‘We love him because He first loved us;’* and then another, ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.’†

“ ‘Do you believe that Christ suffered the punishment of *your sins*, that through Him *you* might have everlasting life?’ he asked me.

“ ‘I suppose so, master,’ I said; ‘for I was made at my baptism a member of Christ.’

* John iv. 19.

† John iii. 16.

“He covered his face for a moment, when I said that, and did not speak. I thought I had vexed him, but I did not know how. At last he looked up: ‘No, John,’ he said, ‘I taught you wrong, when I taught you that your baptism had made you a ‘child of God, and a member of Christ.’ Baptism is only, as you will read in the 27th Article, ‘a *sign* of regeneration or the new birth;’ but it is by believing in Christ that you are born again of His Holy Spirit, and become a ‘child of God;’ as it is written in St. John’s Gospel, ‘As many as received Him, (that is, as their Saviour,) to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.’* ”

“‘But I do not know how to believe in Christ, sir,’ I said. ‘I believe that He died for the world.’ ”

“Do you believe that He died for you, John? Do you receive Him as your own Saviour, and trust in Him alone?” my master asked me.

* John i. 12.

“ ‘I don’t know how to believe that, sir,’ I said, after a little.

“ ‘Then he opened his Bible again, and read a verse to me. I looked out all the verses that he read, afterwards, and marked the places, and many a time I’ve read them since. So he shewed me the verse, as he read it, ‘No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.’* ”

“ ‘Do you think this is true, John?’ he asked me. ‘I think it is, sir,’ I said; ‘I’m sure I can’t come.’ ‘Then you must ask God to lead you to your Saviour by His Holy Spirit,’ he said; ‘and then you will be a child of God, for ‘as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.’† ”

“ ‘Somebody came to speak to master just then, so I had to go, but I never forgot his words. I began from that day to pray to God with my heart, Herbert, that He would give me His Holy Spirit, to lead me to my Saviour, because I couldn’t come; and I’m sure, Herbert, God’s promise is true, and that He gives ‘His

* John vi. 44.

† Rom. viii. 14.

Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.' I hope that Holy Spirit is beginning to lead me; and I'm sure that I'm never so happy, as when I am hearing about Christ, and praying to Him, and finding out in the Bible all the beautiful promises He makes; 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,' and the like; and though I have been a wicked hard-hearted old man, yet I can't help believing, because Christ's own word says that He died for sinners, I can't help believing that He died for me."

By this time they had arrived in front of Herbert's cottage, and had been standing for a few minutes before the door. "Well, the Lord be praised, John, for all His mercy," said Herbert, as the old man concluded. "Oh, it is a blessed word, that 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' But won't you come in?" he continued, as John seemed about to move away; "the mistress will be glad to make you a dish of tea."

"No, thank you, Herbert; I'll step down and have a bit of talk with you another time,

for it does my heart good. But the master will want me, may be, now—so good night.”

They warmly shook hands, and Herbert entered his now saddened home, while John slowly pursued his way to the rectory.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WILL you allow me to preach for you this morning, Selwyn?" said Philip Morley, as Charles joined him in the breakfast-room a little later than usual, upon a bright Sabbath morning, early in April. "You look as if even the walk to church would be more than enough for your strength to-day."

"I have not rested well," replied Charles; "but the fresh air of this lovely morning will quite revive me. In the evening I shall gladly accept your offer of assistance; but I should wish to preach this morning, and I feel quite able to do so."

They passed into the library, and found the servants assembled there for prayer.

Upon this morning Charles's household devotions were rather shorter than usual, but Philip marked a degree of earnest solicitude in his address, and of fervour in his prayer, which,

accustomed as he was to the affectionate anxiety of Charles for the spiritual well-being of every individual of his little household, arrested his attention, and touched his feelings; and he saw that the female servants raised their aprons to their eyes, as they retired from the library, while John, with a visible effort to appear composed, busied himself about the breakfast-table.

The church was about a mile distant from the rectory, and they set out early, that they might walk to it slowly, along the beautiful path through the woods.

Charles seemed languid and exhausted, and his voice was more feeble, and his footsteps slower than they had been for many weeks; but his countenance beamed with a peace more nearly akin to joy than was its habitual expression.

"How beautiful is the workmanship of our Father's hand," he said, pausing as they emerged from the wood upon the brow of a little rising ground, commanding an extensive view of the richly wooded valley at their feet, with the blue

sea sparkling in the sunbeams of the bright April day, and the distant coast of Wales.

“Truly ‘Thy works praise Thee, O Lord.’ But why does man, the being formed in thine own image, turn his fair home into the abode of misery? and why, O why, do those whom Thou hast commissioned to water the moral desert that it may blossom as the rose, seal the pure fountain of life, with which thou hast bidden them fill their vessels, and neither drink themselves, nor suffer the perishing and the weary to approach the spring?”

An expression of deep sadness shaded his brow, he turned from the lovely scene, and walked on for some time in silence.

“Let us bless God, Philip,” said he, at length, “that man cannot eventually frustrate His will. No: above the malice, the opposition, the errors of the creatures of His hand, He will carry out His glorious designs. ‘The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas;’ and the ‘glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus, shall be manifested in the sight of an assembled uni-

verse. Oh that the blessed era were arrived !
Oh that with one soul and one voice the
children of God would unite in the prayer,
‘ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ! ’ ”

He paused, as they entered the gate of the churchyard. Many of the people were lingering there and in the porch, to receive a word, a smile of recognition, from their beloved pastor as he passed.

He noticed them all with his accustomed kindness, and then entered the church. For some time the congregation had been rapidly increasing in number, and now crowded the church to overflowing.

Philip Morley read prayers ; and then Charles preached from the first chapter of St. John’s gospel at the fourth verse, “ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

He spoke of the glory of Jesus as the God by whom all things were made, and whose delights from the beginning were with the sons of men, from whom not even the fore-knowledge of the humiliation, the sufferings, the death, at the cost of which He must retain them as the objects of

His love, could turn away his regards. He then went on to speak of Him as the God of salvation, the restorer and source of natural, of moral, and of spiritual life, by whom all things consist, from whom this fair earth derives its beauty, and man the health of his physical and moral existence; and in whom His chosen and ransomed ones possess eternal life with all its inestimable blessings. And then he spoke of the blessed Spirit, "the Lord and giver of life," through whose agency the withered branches are united to the living vine; who in the fulfilment of His part in the everlasting covenant made by the Father with Christ and His redeemed ones,* dwells in their souls, implanting and maintaining in them that principle of spiritual life, by the exercise of whose functions alone, they are enabled to behold in their true light, and savingly to understand, the character and work of the Redeemer, as these are revealed in the volume of inspiration. And he concluded by urging his people, with an earnestness in which all the powers of his mind, all the affections of his heart, seemed concen-

* Psalm lxxxix. 20—37.

trated, to come to the Saviour, trust in Him, look to Him, as their "all in all." His word their sole guide, His character and work the sole ground of their salvation, His Spirit their sole Comforter, Sanctifier, Enlightener, Guide to His presence, at the brightness of whose appearing, darkness and ignorance and error would flee away, as the shadows of night at the sunrise of morning.

When Charles began to preach, his voice was low, and he looked pale and exhausted. Yet such was the breathless attention of his auditors, that every word was distinctly heard. But as he proceeded to shew forth the glory of the Saviour, "whom having not seen, he loved," languor and pain and weakness seemed forgotten. His cheek glowed, and his eye beamed with a brightness such as youth and health could not have given; and his voice, in the affectionate fervor of its pleading tones, seemed to thrill the hearts of his hearers, many of whom were dissolved in tears.

He had just concluded, and seemed to pause for a moment before pronouncing the bene-

diction, when a sudden paleness overspread his features, he grasped the side of the pulpit, as if for support, and then sunk fainting in its seat. In a moment Philip Morley and Dr. Mowbray were by his side, but before they reached him, the white handkerchief he held was dyed with blood. The exertion of preaching had been too great for the delicate lungs, and an important blood-vessel had given way.

As soon as Charles was able to bear the fatigue, he was carefully removed to the rectory, while an express was despatched to London to call in the assistance of an eminent physician from thence, and another sent to Ellerdale, to bring Henry and Helen without delay to Linwood.

When Dr. Woodford had heard from Dr. Mowbray the particulars of Charles's case, and had seen his patient, Philip for a moment left his place by the bed of his friend to learn the opinion of the physician regarding him.

One glance at his countenance sufficed to send an icy chill to his heart.

"I fear that I can afford you but little

comfort, Mr. Morley," said Dr. Woodford, in answer to the enquiry spoken in Philip's looks, for his tongue refused to utter it. "There is not a chance of Mr. Selwyn's ultimate recovery, though he may rally for a time from his present state of exhaustion."

Philip was silent; he turned from the calm and polite, but unsympathizing physician, and walked to the further end of the room. By a powerful effort of self-control, he repressed the tide of anguish which these words had borne in upon his heart, and turned again towards Dr. Woodford, with an aspect and manner that to a casual observer might have seemed calm as his own.

"Do you apprehend any immediate change?" he enquired, "or may it be long before"—he stopped.

"Mr Selwyn may continue in his present state for a short time, and then gradually sink," he replied; "or he may revive for a time, and for a few days, or even weeks, regain a measure of strength; but any degree of fatigue or excitement must be carefully guarded

against, as their consequences might be immediately fatal." He then gave to Philip and Dr. Mowbray, a few necessary directions for the treatment of his patient, and politely bowing, as he withdrew, stepped into his comfortable traveling carriage and drove from the rectory.

Henry and Helen arrived at Linwood at a late hour of the succeeding evening.

A few days of perfect quiet seemed to restore Charles from the immediate effect of his sudden illness, and the exhaustion consequent upon loss of blood; and he was able to be removed to a couch placed before his open window, where he could enjoy the beautiful scene that lay before him, smiling in the beams of the glowing sun, and breathe the fragrant air that blew softly over the meadows laden with the sweet perfume of the opening blossoms of spring.

Henry preached at Linwood upon the first Sabbath after his arrival there; and he was beset, as he entered and left the church, by the anxious throng of enquirers for the health of their beloved pastor, with which the churchyard was filled.

Amongst these, Herbert Brown lingered until the crowd had somewhat dispersed; and then following Henry a few steps upon his way to the rectory, he said, "I beg your pardon, sir, for disturbing you, but I was very anxious just to learn from yourself if we may hope ever to hear our dear Mr. Selwyn preach to us again?"

Henry's feelings, already deeply excited, were for a few moments so overcome as to prevent his reply. "I fear we must be prepared to lose him, Herbert," he said at last. "May God enable us to say, 'Thy will be done,' and sanctify this heavy trial."

Herbert wiped the tears away, that were already rolling down his sunburnt cheek. "Will you give my dear master my duty, sir, and tell him—I think he would like to hear that God has made his instructions the means of leading me to my Saviour. He knows that I was sore troubled after my poor Mary's death—but he does not know that it was through him that God sent an answer to the prayers for His Holy Spirit's teaching that I had

offered, ever since Mary was taken—first because she had bidden me; and afterwards because I felt that I was a poor ignorant sinner, and could do nothing to help myself. Tell him that I thank him for all his kindness, and pray God to bless him now and for ever.”

He turned away wholly overcome by the feelings that the mention of all he owed to his pastor had called forth, and hurried into the wood.

Deeply affected, Henry pursued his solitary walk to the rectory. He found Charles looking better than when he had left him. “Come and sit by me, Henry,” he said, extending his hand with a smile of pleasure, as Henry entered. “And you, my own Helen,” he continued, affectionately kissing her pale cheek, as she bent over him to arrange the cushion upon which he leaned, “go and revive those exhausted looks in the garden; it saddens me to see you spend in my sick room so many hours of the bright spring day.”

“I feel unusually well to-day, Henry,” he continued, after Helen had withdrawn; “and

I wish to use this interval of strength, in saying to you much that I would not willingly leave unspoken."

"Yes, I know your fears," he continued, as Henry would have asked him rather to spare his strength. "You would bid me guard from every breath, this feeble spark of life. But do not fear, my friend; for the dear sakes of those around me, I would willingly shield it from a sudden extinction. But I feel that it will relieve me to tell you all that fills this often burthened heart, and I will speak very low—it will not weary me.

"And first, let me thank you, my best friend, for your unwearied interest in me, for your counsels, your prayers. They have not been in vain. Such was the subtilty of the net in which I was entangled, that I believe that all the powers of mere human reason would have failed in unraveling its meshes, and that nothing but the 'sword of the Spirit,' which is the word of God,' would have succeeded in severing them.

"This was the weapon you employed, my

friend, and even this for a time I withstood ; but though not at first convinced, I was unsettled, and lost my confidence in the scriptural authority of the views which I had held and taught. In proportion as I did so, the consciousness of the awful responsibility of the office I had assumed, pressed with an increasing weight upon my spirit.

“The words in which you and my own Helen had repeatedly warned me to beware, lest I should mislead immortal souls to their eternal ruin, unceasingly haunted my thoughts, and soon received a fearful practical commentary in scenes that I shudder to remember.”

He paused, and covering his face, remained silent for some time ; then by a strong effort, repressing the recollections that crowded upon his mind, he continued.

“That was a dark period of my short history, Henry. Around me were loneliness, disease and death ; within—ah ! you have never known, you can never know, the darkness, the confusion, the misery that wasted there.

“My false refuges were shaken to their foun-

dation ; and I knew not how, or where, to find some rock, against which the storm of conflicting feelings might beat in vain.

"I was in this state of mind, when I was summoned to attend the death-bed of Captain Morven." Charles here rapidly narrated the particulars of that awful scene.

"I cannot go on now, Henry," he said, as he closed his narrative. "The remembrance of that night harrows up my very soul. Leave me, my friend. It is only at the foot of the mercy-seat that I can bear such thoughts as now throng upon my spirit."

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Henry, after evening service was over, took his place again by the couch of his friend, he found him calm and self-possessed as ever, though he seemed exhausted, and a deeper shade of sadness than he had lately seen there, clouded his brow.

He would have entreated him to reserve all conversation upon topics which engaged his feelings, until some future opportunity; but Charles seemed anxious to finish, while he felt able to do so, the narrative which, but from the dread of injuring him, Henry would have longed to hear.

“The restless thoughts that often disquiet me, fatigue me more than talking to you does, Henry; and when you know all that I have to tell, you will be better able to ‘strive together

with me, in your prayers to God for me ;' and perhaps, too, the history of my wanderings may guide you, in your future efforts to lead the souls of those who err, as I have done, into the path of peace.

"I will not try to describe the tempest that shook my soul, on that fearful night,"—he continued. "Even reason seemed to totter upon her throne. I hastened to my room, as soon as we entered the rectory. I spent the greater part of the night in walking up and down my apartment, striving, by the rapid motion of the body, to still the tumult of the soul. At last, hardly knowing what I did, I threw myself upon my knees. One passage of Holy Scripture suddenly suggested itself—or rather, I believe, was suggested by the blessed Spirit of truth—to my mind : 'I am the light of the world ; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'* It rose like a star in the midnight darkness of my soul, and seemed to shed on the deep waters that overwhelmed me, a ray of hope. 'Draw me,' was the prayer I

* John viii. 12.

breathed from the depths of my heart, 'Draw me, I will run after Thee.'

"How precious to me, from that hour, have been the promises of the Holy Spirit's habitation in the souls of men, to accomplish in them the work of salvation, which has been wrought out for them by their glorious Redeemer.

"Even in that hour, when the first ray of hope in God broke in upon my benighted soul, I felt that but for that Holy One's guiding love, Christ, for me, had died in vain. I might, indeed, have heard the footsteps of the Saviour of the world, and known that 'Jesus of Nazareth passed by;' but my veiled eyes could not have beheld Him, nor my feet have followed in the path He trod.

"And since that hour, when the voice of the Comforter first whispered of peace to my heart, the same Almighty Friend has enlightened my darkness, and instructed my ignorant mind, and enabled me still to keep my eye stedfastly fixed upon the Bright and Morning Star, and to follow Him whom my soul loveth, even

though His footsteps have been in the deep waters."

"Sometimes the sophisms which had once deceived me, were permitted again to assail my mind; but I was not left unaided to oppose them. I remembered that it was written, 'He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you;'^{*} and I knew that only that, by which Jesus, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of His people, in all the fulness of His love, in all the sufficiency of His free salvation, was glorified—could be the teaching of the eternal Spirit; and when any doctrine of the Holy Scripture perplexed or troubled me, I sought the aid of Him who had inspired it, to guide me into all truth."

Charles stopped, and seemed much exhausted. Henry entreated him to compose himself to rest. "I shall very soon do so, my friend; I have but a few words more to say," he continued, speaking almost in a whisper, yet with a solemn earnestness that made every word distinctly audible; "I have not tried step by

^{*} John xvi. 14.

step to retrace the path of error, in which I had led my flock : I have rather sought to break down its hedges, and lead them at once into the pastures of the Good Shepherd's fold.

"I have preached to them 'Christ Jesus and Him crucified.' I have taught them, not 'with excellency of speech, and of man's wisdom,' but from the word, and by the help, of my God, that, 'by one offering of Himself,' Christ has made a perfect and complete atonement for sin, and has established 'an everlasting righteousness,' which 'is unto all, and upon all them that believe.' I have directed them to the 'Word of God' as their sole rule of faith ; to the grace of Christ as their sole ground of confidence ; to the Holy Spirit as the sole agent of regeneration, the author and finisher of that 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.'

"Yet though, thus late, I have striven to lead my flock to the Fountain of living waters, I cannot, alas ! say with the Apostle, 'I am clear from the blood of all men.' " He stopped for a few moments, greatly agitated, and then con-

tinued, "Oh, my friend, the remembrance of the souls whom I have led astray, who, perhaps even now, because I directed them not to the City of Refuge, have fallen under the hand of the Avenger of blood, sometimes fills my soul with an anguish, that but for the refuge I find at the foot of the Cross, would render existence a burden too heavy to be borne.

"Yet in the darkest hour of temptation and grief, I seem to hear amidst the raging of the tempest, the whisper of those words of love, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Yes, Peter's agony, Peter's repentance, and I trust Peter's forgiveness too, have been mine. But I shall never be honored with Peter's commission. My sun has gone down at noon, another must feed my flock, another must 'strengthen my brethren : ' yet though the lowest place at His feet be mine, I too shall dwell in the presence of Him whose face Peter now beholds with joy."

"Yet, ere He call you hence, He has set His seal upon your work, Charles," said Henry, as his friend paused. "One soul you have

already been commissioned to guide into the way of peace. How many may yet be led through your instructions to enter there, you will only know, perhaps, when you find them with you at the right hand of Christ, in the day of His appearing." He then related his meeting with Herbert Brown, and gave to Charles the message with which he had entrusted him.

Charles was deeply affected. "I thank Thee," he murmured, raising his eyes, filled with tears of gratitude, to heaven, "that Thou hast permitted me to bear to any the glad tidings of salvation. Oh that the seed of Thy word, sown in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, may spring up in many hearts when I shall have passed from earth. Tell Herbert," he continued, turning to Henry, "that his message cheered my dying bed. Tell him that I bid him cleave to Christ, look to Him, trust in Him alone, 'follow Him whithersoever He goeth,' if he would meet me with joy at His right hand, when He cometh in the clouds of heaven.'"

For a few days from this time Charles appeared

to be gradually gaining strength ; and though his nights were often restless, and he seemed languid and exhausted during the earlier part of the day, he revived in the evening, and sometimes entered with all his former power and vivacity into conversation upon subjects of varied interest, by introducing which, he strove, at least for a time, to turn the attention of his dear companions from that object of all-absorbing interest, which he felt himself to be to each one of the affectionate hearts around him. During this interval of strength, he saw, at different times, several of his parishioners ; though his anxious attendants persuaded him to make his interviews with them shorter than he would willingly have done.

To these parting instructions of their beloved pastor, many of his flock, in after years, traced their first clear understanding of the great truths connected with man's redemption. And his clear and simple exposition of the gospel of Christ was made, by the power of God the Holy Spirit, the message of peace to some, who had trembled under the fear of God's righteous

displeasure, and now believed for the first time that He could be just and yet "a Saviour."

Upon one of these evenings, Charles had a private conversation of some length with his faithful John. Henry met the old man, as he was leaving his master's room. He stopped, as Henry was about to pass with merely a kind word of recognition, and seemed anxious to speak to him.

Henry turned with him into a small ante-room, opening from the passage in which they stood. He saw that his heart was full, and soothingly addressed to him some words of comfort. But the sympathizing tone of his voice at once unlocked the floodgates of the old man's grief; and leaning his head upon his clasped hands, he wept for some moments without control.

"Oh, sir," he said, when the exhaustion of his feelings had produced a temporary calm, "it is very hard to part with the master that I've carried so often, a child, in my arms; yes, and held him on my knee, and told him tales, and walked beside him when he first mounted

his poney ; and how proud I was when I had taught him to gallop off by himself ! I'm a poor useless old man, sir," he continued, while large tears rolled afresh down his cheeks, as the recollection of his beloved master's early days crowded upon his mind ; "and all my pride and pleasure was to attend him, and all my hope for this world was that I should have him to speak a word of comfort on my death-bed, and to lay my head in the grave ; and now it is I who must walk in the light of the blessed sun, while his head is laid low ;—and to think too that it was attending that bad man, who deserved no kindness at his hand, that he got his death."

"What bad man, John ?" enquired Henry, in an agitated tone ; for he had not heard of any external cause of the decline in Charles's health, which had been, he was told, advancing slowly, though, until his recent attack, not alarmingly, for many months.

John looked up ; his grief checked in its expression, for a moment, by the fear that he had said something he ought not.

“Dr. Mowbray never said so, sir, and may be I am wrong; but I don’t think I am. My master, to be sure, had been looking pale and ill enough, for some time before; but it was after that fearful night, when he was out attending Captain Morven, that his cough began, and that I used to see him put his hand to his side, when he did not know that I was looking at him. I sometimes made bold, sir, to ask him to write to you, and get you here for a little while to help him,—that was before Mr. Morley came, sir; but he would just smile when I spoke this way, and say, ‘Oh no, John; Henry,’ he would say, sir, ‘has enough to do in his own parish, and that if Miss Helen’—I beg your pardon, sir, Mrs. Egerton—‘knew that anything was the matter with him, she would not be kept away; and you know, John,’ he would say, ‘it might injure her to travel in this cold weather, when she has been ill so lately.’ And then he would say, ‘You are too anxious about me, my kind John; I shall be quite well when spring returns.’ And oh, so he will be well, sir,—better

than we could make him here ; but what shall we do without him ?”

Henry was much affected. “ It is the will of God, John,” he said, after a short pause, during which he strove, and by the promised help from above, given in answer to his momentary prayer, strove not in vain, to repress the rising murmur of regret that would have mingled with his grief. “ Let us seek closely to follow that Saviour, in whose presence your dear master will soon be eternally happy, till we too shall arrive in our Father’s house, and meet him there, never to part again.”

“ Yes, sir,” replied John, wiping the still flowing tears from his eyes. “ Yes, sir, that is my only comfort, and God does help my hard wicked heart to say, ‘ Thy will be done.’ Blessed be His name, that He led me by my dear young master’s instructions, to my Saviour. And it is a comfort, sir, to feel that an old man like me can’t be very long of following him.”

Upon the succeeding day, Charles appeared rather weaker than usual. He had not slept well for some nights, and in the evening seemed

tired and inclined to rest. Philip had succeeded in persuading Henry and Helen to go out for a little to breathe the cool evening air; and was watching, by Charles's couch, the half slumber into which he had fallen. When he opened his eyes, he smiled on seeing Philip, and extended his hand to him. "My dear Philip, I have been anxious to say a few words to you. I have said nearly all that I wished; but I remember that you once asked me, if I thought that it was right to risk my life, as I did, in the attempt to discharge my long neglected duty to my flock;—I cannot enter now into the question of how far the Apostle's example of willingness to 'spend and be spent' in his Master's service, authorizes us to continue our efforts to bring souls to Christ, even when it must be at the sacrifice of a measure of the health which is His gift, or at the risk of the life which He has redeemed, that we do so. But I would guard you against the danger of labouring in the spirit which, though I knew it not, I now see exercised its influence over me. There was impatience in

my determination, by 'labours more abundant, to try to redeem the time that I had worse than lost; and there was self-will in the tenacity with which I kept possession of the trust I had so unfaithfully fulfilled; even after the warning voice had sounded in my ears, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' I would impress upon you this lesson, Philip, even with my dying breath, that 'Christ is all,' man nothing.

"You will soon have the sole charge of the flock we have together watched. Regard them less as *your* flock, or as the charge of your dying friend, which I know you would love for his sake, than as the 'flock of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood;' and look to Him alone to make you, by His guiding word and Holy Spirit, an able minister of the everlasting Gospel, and to accomplish by you all His purposes of love towards the souls He died to save."

He paused, much fatigued. Philip vainly tried to repress his emotion. "I promise to

do so, God helping me, Charles," he exclaimed. "But how sad and lonely my work will be, when you are no longer here to counsel and encourage me."

"A better friend than I have been, has promised to be 'with you always,' dear Philip. Seek to know Him better; go 'up from the wilderness,' leaning on your Saviour as the beloved and the friend of your soul, and you will have no cause to regret that He has separated you, for the short remainder of your pilgrimage, from your earthly friend, only that He might draw you closer to Himself."

* * * * *

"I have come to call you, as I promised, dear Helen," said Henry, as the sound of his footstep, approaching her bed, awoke Helen from the light slumber into which, but a short time before, she had fallen at a very early hour on the succeeding morning. "But Charles is sleeping very quietly; and I wish you would continue to rest, and allow me to watch by him during the remainder of the night."

"No, Henry," replied Helen, as she rose ; "I am quite refreshed now, and you have hardly slept these two nights. How is Mr. Morley?"

"He is asleep now, poor fellow," replied Henry ; "but I could not persuade him to lie down till about an hour ago. Though you know he has had so much fatigue lately, and he looked quite worn out, he seemed as if he could not bear to leave Charles, even for a few hours ; and has been watching him while he slept, with such an expression of misery on his pale young face, that it made my heart bleed to look at him."

Helen was now quite ready, and having assured herself that Henry would be comfortable, she softly left the room, and took her place by Charles's bed.

The curtains of the window were withdrawn, but the early dawn hardly yet blended its grey light with the pale rays of the shaded lamp, that burned near Charles's bed.

He slept calmly for some time, while Helen sat by his side, her eyes half-unconsciously

riveted on the pale features that she soon must behold no more on earth.

Thoughts of the past crowded fast upon her mind. Scenes, long gone by, appeared again to live before her with all the vividness of present reality. Again Charles and she seemed to share their parents' caresses, again to kneel at their mother's knee to repeat their childish prayer. Her thoughts next dwelt upon the time when she, then almost an infant, would learn to read, because Charles was doing so; and the pride with which he had brought his little pupil to read her first lesson in their mother's dressing-room; and the kisses and praise that had rewarded her lisping efforts.

And then Charles seemed once more to place her upon the poney he had trained for her use, and mounting his own spirited little horse, to guide her to the favorite haunts of his leisure hours, that had hitherto been too distant for her to accompany him in his wanderings.

And next her memory dwelt upon their sad parting, when their beloved mother had, after one short year of widowhood, followed to the

grave the husband she had loved so well, and their happy home had been deserted, and Charles had left her with relatives almost strangers, save in name, to go to a public school.

Her tears fell upon the bed over which she leant, as the remembrance of that parting brought the sad recollection with startling freshness to her mind, of the final separation—so far as earth was concerned—from that beloved brother, that seemed so near at hand.

Suddenly Charles's sleep became disturbed. An expression of painful anxiety contracted his brow, and some indistinct murmurs broke from his lips.

"Oh, no, no!" at length he exclaimed, but without awaking. "Say not that the ruin of his soul lies upon my head. He had the Bible; why did he not test my words by it?"

He started, as he uttered the words, and awoke.

"Is it you, my Helen?" he said, as his eyes met the affectionate gaze that was earnestly

fixed upon him. "Come near me, dearest, and let me look once more upon that beloved countenance."

He drew her towards him, and tenderly kissing her pale cheek, retained her hand in his, while, in a voice whose touching tones Helen felt as if she now heard for the last time, he implored for her the blessing of their God.

He thanked Him for a sister's love, the fairest flower that had gladdened his earthly path. He thanked Him with yet deeper fervour, that death could not blight that love, but that the flower which had budded on earth would bloom for ever in heaven.

He prayed that He, who is "a brother" born for adversity, would be the friend and guide of his beloved sister during the remainder of her mortal life, and would receive her at last to that eternal home, whence they should "go no more out," but together behold their Father's face with joy, and sorrow and death should have passed away.

He ceased, and lay quiet for a few moments,

as if deeply engaged in thought. Gradually the expression of hope and love that had beamed upon his features while he prayed, gave place again to the dark cloud that had shaded them on his first awakening.

"Some dark visions disturbed me, Helen," he said at length, "and they do not pass away with sleep. There is the tenderness, my sister, as well as the chastening of a Father's love, in the message that calls me so soon from my place in the vineyard of the Lord ; for the more deeply I feel the infinite love of the Saviour of sinners, and the more vividly the dread realities of the eternal world open before me, the darker are the seasons of anguish that visit my soul, when I remember that, misled by the false doctrines I have taught, many have passed into that awful eternity, resting upon another foundation than that Saviour's work." He paused for a moment, and then continued : "Let this be your comfort, my Helen, when you mourn for me, that it was your words which first shook the fabric I had reared upon the quicksands of error, and that your affec-

tionate counsels, and Henry's, were blessed of God to guide me to the feet of that Saviour, in whose presence, unworthy though I be, I shall be rejoicing, even while you will be weeping my loss.

"And now, my Helen," he added, after a short silence, "I feel weary, and could sleep again. Will you sing me one of the sweet hymns you sung last night?"

He composed himself quietly to rest, and closed his eyes. As Helen resumed her seat by his bed, she heard him softly murmur some words; she bent to catch the sound, fearful lest he should have asked her for anything he might want. "There remaineth therefore a rest—" he stopped, and Helen, gently drawing the curtain to shade him from the brightening rays of morning, sang in a low voice the sweet words,

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood," &c.

When she had ceased, she thought, from Charles's soft regular breathing, that he had fallen asleep; and fearful of disturbing him, she

did not sing again, but sat quietly by his side, engaged in mingled thought and prayer, as the morning slowly advanced.

The sun had just risen, and shed the full radiance of his beams into the room, and across the bed upon which Charles lay.

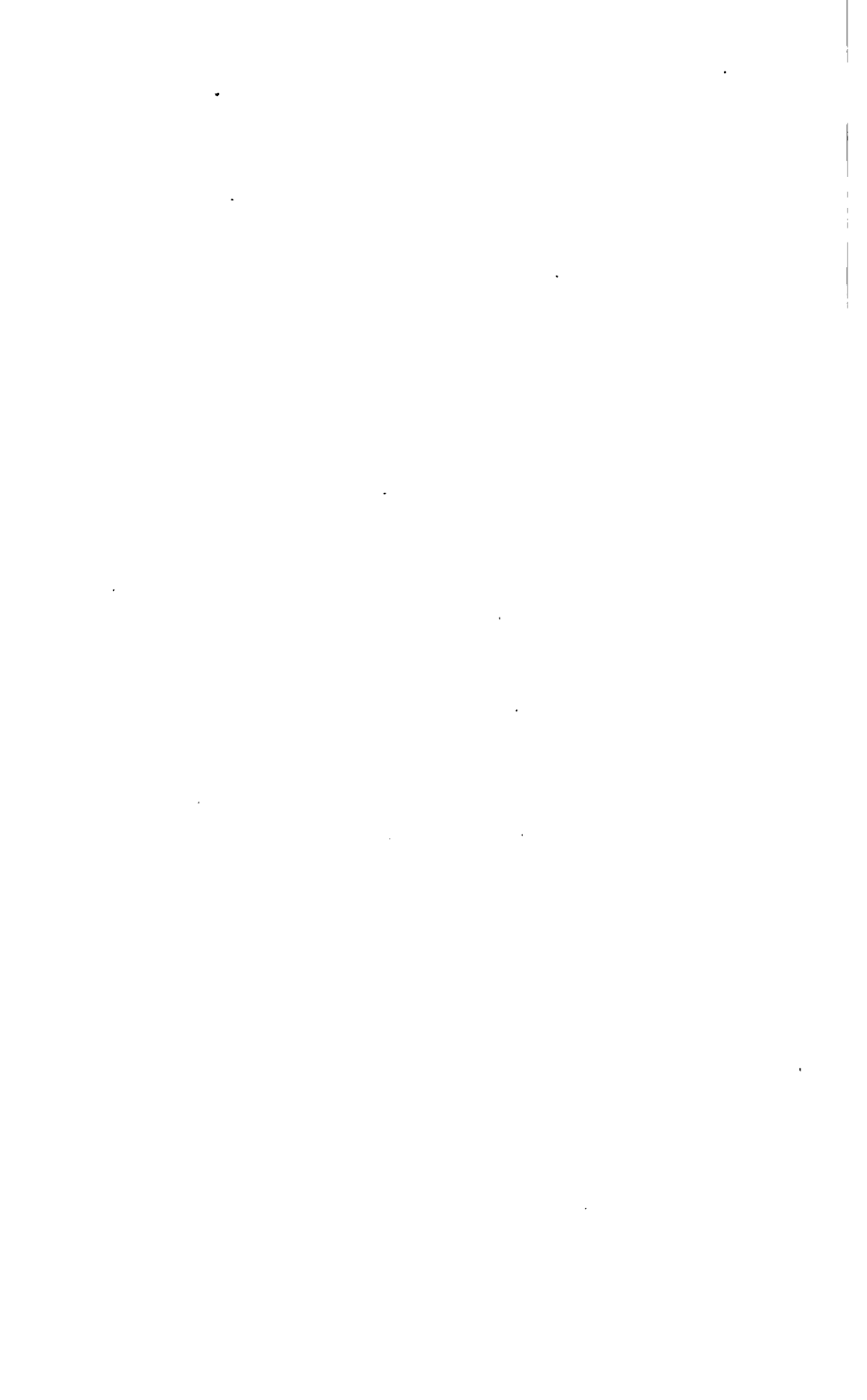
As Helen looked on the glowing sky and sparkling sea, the words, "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds," seemed to breathe their soothing influence over her spirit; and, for a few moments, the present was forgotten, while in thought she hailed the glorious day of Christ's appearing, and beheld her beloved brother amidst the white-robed throng, whose songs of triumph should usher in the dawn of that eternal day.

Suddenly she was startled by the deep silence—silence that might be felt—that seemed to reign around.

She hastily rose, dreading she knew not what, and softly drew aside the curtain that shaded Charles from the bright sunbeams that filled the room.

He lay in the attitude of quiet repose, in which he had fallen asleep. An expression of perfect peace reigned on his brow, and seemed to breathe from his features, and a sweet smile lingered around his lips, but his spirit had passed to the presence of his God.

THE END.



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